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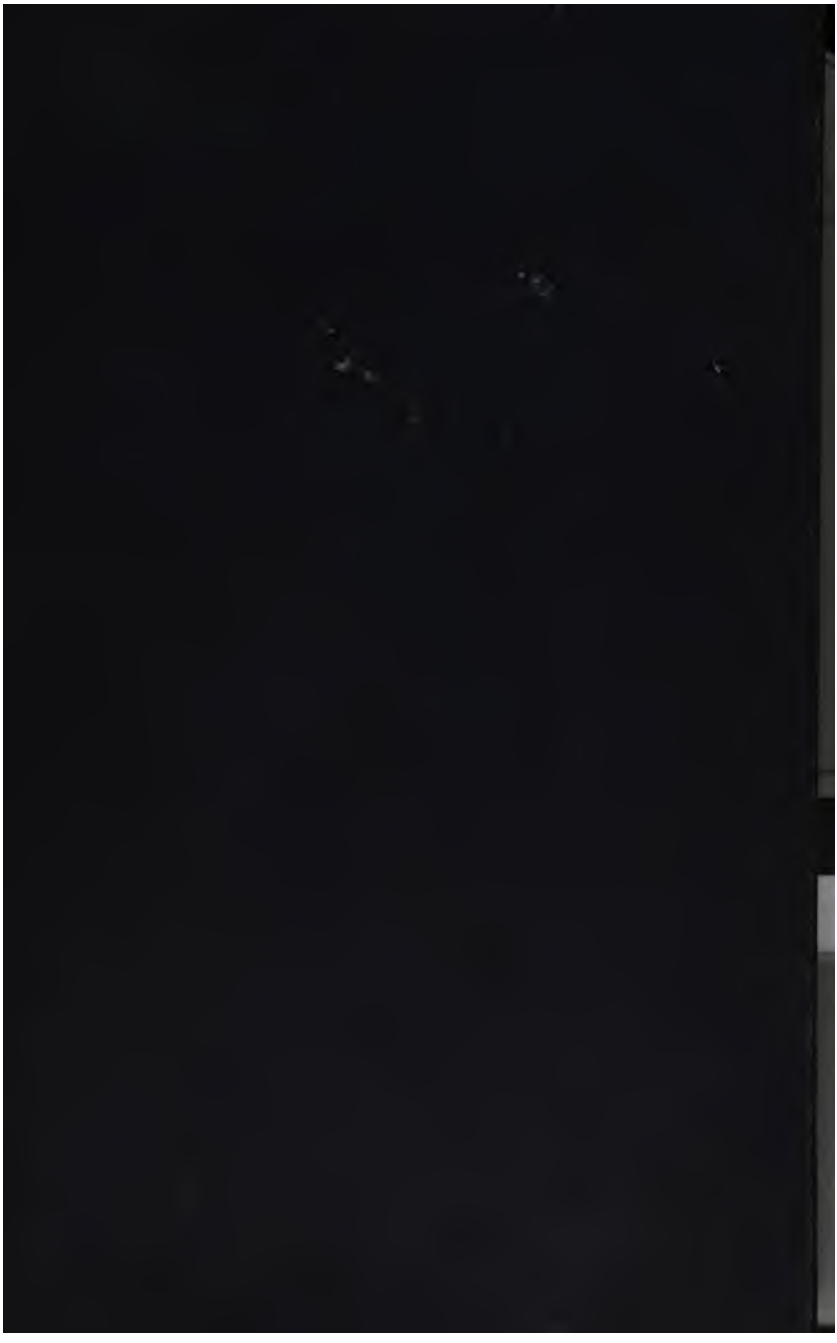

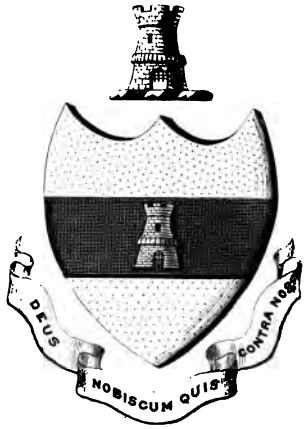

WALDO HIGGINSON.

HARVARD COLLEGE

COLMAN'S

LIBRARY OF ROMANCE.

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UNDINE:

A MINIATURE ROMANCE:

FROM THE GERMAN

OF

BARON DE LA MOTTE FOUQUE.

COLMAN'S LIBRARY OF ROMANCE,

Edited by

GRENVILLE MELLEN.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY SAMUEL COLMAN,

No. VIII, ASTOR-HOUSE,

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A GENERAL PREFACE

TO THE

"LIBRARY OF ROMANCE."

It may seem proper, as well as be acceptable to readers, on presenting a series of works under this title, to render a reason for doing something that may appear to many as fantastical as it is out of the ordinary course. As I think a good one can be given, I will ask the indulgence of a short time and a few pages, in which to offer it.

Since the "Reign of Terror," so well supported by the genius of Mrs. Radcliffe and Monk Lewis, has passed away from influence and almost from memory, the name of "Romance" has been, at best, in but bad association, and carried, through whole nations, but a bad repute. It has been a word, which, if you introduced in good company, you felt must come always with an apology. You have felt a delicacy and doubt about acknowledging its companionship, and that you had for it a respect and regard that it was a pride and pleasure with you to feel and cultivate.

In relation to this subject, there has been, I conceive, for too long a time, a singular mistake pervading society. It is now evidently giving way; and it seems to be the duty of all who have at heart the moral improvement of the age, and the purifying and elevation of our literature, to aid in the good work of the total eradication and forgetfulness of the error.

This false conception concerning Romance has been of nearly the same character with that concerning Poetry. It has been supposed incompatible with the exertions of a great mind; whereas *Romance*, in its best sense, as well as strong and living *Poetry*, can be the production of a great mind *only*. It has been supposed to be a subject unworthy the study and action of a manly intellect, as well as unhealthy for any spirit with which it comes in contact; whereas *Romance* has ever been, and is, like *Poetry*, one of the most elevating and excellent objects with which the spirit can be busied, and one of the most invigorating and instructive with which any heart can be associated. It has been supposed, that it was for the most part based on *fiction*, nothing substantial could be derived to the living and enduring part within us; whereas *Romance*, like *Poetry*, so it be true to the great qualities of its name, may be made the noblest and most beautiful medium through which he is acted upon, to convey to man uplifting and undying principles, and good and golden *lessons. It has been supposed* that *Romance*, like Poetry, could not become a *household god, to gladden* and grace us by its presence; whereas nothing can *impart, in an equal degree*, such a loveliness and joy to the domestic hearth.

Imaginative writing has no doubt had much to contend with in later times, from the fact that it has been so much and so grossly abused, and the principle of excellence which is its birth-right, been so prostituted to the uses of the unmeaning and extravagant. *Romance* has been lost in an ultra-fiction, absurdly unnatural; and *Poetry* in something that has no definition in any thing in nature, and no response in a single bosom it may have stormed its way to. Under these circumstances it was proper and desirable that a better fiction should stir the spirit of the imaginative writer to better efforts. That a fiction which found a representative of much of its "web and woof," in what nature presented, should take the place of fiction that found nothing to answer it in the *outward* or the *inward* of creation. That imagination should act as the minister to good impulses and refined affections, instead of the pander to a bad knowledge and to worse passions.

Upon the hints suggested by these reflections, I felt convinced that something might be done, through the literature of our time, for the improvement of our literary taste and character, and the strengthening of a moral principle, better and more becoming to us, every where. I venture to say that by a right joinder of the romantic and imaginative with the unveiling and business-spirit of our age, a double amount of improvement may be secured both to the intellect and heart. *Good* lessons are better given in attractive rebuke, and a quiet illustration of their better tone, than in homely reproof, without a solitary thing to relieve the harshness of the cadence. *Great* lessons are better given in a language which it will ever be pleasant to remember, and which can certainly take nothing from the truth of what it would inculcate, by the pleasant and fascinating music in which it inculcates it. *All* lessons are better given through a medium which at once administers pleasure and instruction, than through that which derives so much of its virtue from its mathematical regularity and measured definitions.

There is another mistake which, in this connection, deserves notice. It is not mentioned as a discovery; for the error is familiar to every mind that has indulged in the most passing observation, but as a fact the existence of which has been so long a matter of common knowledge, and yet so long been suffered to continue unmodified and almost unnoticed. I allude to the mistake that that cannot be poetry which is devoid of measure — or a poem, which does not march to its glory or its grave in an apparel of more than military precision, and, from beginning to end, through continuous and tiresome ranks of rhythm.

With examining and thoughtful minds the fallacy of this principle is sufficiently apparent. But such minds constitute but a small number of the many that seek for amusement and instruction through the ministration of books. The error therefore should be eradicated from the understanding of every creature that can read, or derive pleasure from a solitary page of poetry or prose.

It is certainly true that Poetry and Romance will be differently defined and appreciated by different minds—all of which have a correct idea, in their extensive meaning, of genius and inspiration. Even in England, we are told, Pope is ranked by some, no higher than the class of ingenious men—and Hume, it is known, held most dishonourable anddisgraceful sentiments concerning Shakspeare. So did Napoleon. He regarded that great bard and Milton too, in a light even amusing. 'I have read Shakspeare,' said he;—'there is nothing that approaches Corneille and Racine. There is no possibility of reading one of his pieces through. They excite pity. As *to Milton,* there is nothing but his invocation to the sun, and two or three other *passages. The rest is a mere* rhapsody.*

* *Thi*baudeau's Memoirs of the Consulate.

The idea that no work can be a poem which is not after some set form, or according to some particular creed, or way of thinking, in connection with such things; that it cannot, especially, be a poem, unless it is gathered up in metre—would seem to be a thought quite sympathetic with that of many verse-makers in the middle of the seventeenth century, upon the subject of *shaped poems*—in which they were apt to indulge. With them, the verse must take its *form*—but the *sense* or melody might take its chance! We are told that there were 'amatory poems in the shape of roses, looking-glasses, fans, and ladies' gowns; drinking-songs in the shape of wine-glasses, bottles, and flagons; religious verses in the shape of pulpits and altars; rhymed epitaphs in the shape of tomb-stones; and not to mention flying angels and trumpets of fame, there were patriotic odes in the shape of Grecian temples and Egyptian pyramids.'* I have seen one or two old French specimens of this architectural poetry, in the shapes of a bottle and glass, that were exceedingly spirited and amusing.

So perfect do I conceive the beauty of the fiction, and the nature of the imagination as depicted in such graceful and attractive works as Phantasmion and Undine, that I do not feel as if better specimens could be pointed to of that happy combination of poetry and prose, which so well illustrates the truth of the doctrine in literature I would here enforce, or which is so well adapted to do away that mistake in the community respecting *Romance*, *Poetry*, and their only and proper spirit, which is at once so unnatural, and so unworthy of a thinking people.

That mistake, as has been before observed, is yielding, it is believed, to a better spirit, and a better light upon these subjects, than has fallen upon man before, for a weary time. It is believed that with the prevalence of this healthier sentiment, much, very much, may be done to impart a tone and character to Literature, which will ever be the best guaranty it can attain, both for its PRESERVATION and its VIRTUE.

GRENVILLE MELLEN.

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* Book of Table Talk.

EDITORIAL.

SYMPATHIZING as I do with the writer, in most of the views he has taken in his Preface to the beautiful Tale of which he has here given us a translation, I present that introduction with but slight difference in the language. I would observe, however, that I am willing to go even farther than himself in my admiration of Undine, as a work involving in the *spirit* of its heroine, even before she received her *soul*—(for, whether synonymous or not, it is in vain to say there was no *spirit* there, where so much was developed calculated to *instruct* mankind,)—a work, I say, involving in the spirit of its heroine, so much of what IS, after all, at its foundation, the *principle* of TRUTH and VIRTUE.

That this Story is a masterpiece in the department of the imaginative, there can, I think, be no question; and I am happy to be able to present so valuable and beautiful an embodying of the truth I hold to and would so widely diffuse — that many of the best, most important, and noblest lessons we can take or scatter, are those that pass to the spirit through the medium of a pure, instructive imagination, and good and lofty poetry.

That we are "justly" esteemed a less imaginative race than the people of Germany, I think, may be fairly questioned. We may produce less of the fanciful *material*, as a nation; but it would seem to be because there is among us less occasion to bring it out than among the Germans—not because the fountains of Poetry are less, or less deep in our bosoms.

The sentiments of Mr. Coleridge on this work, as presented by the translator, appear somewhat extravagant, inasmuch as there is, in truth, no idea, of the greatest mind, which is not "made up"—a *composition*. Scott, I think it must be admitted, gave as many "*absolutely new*" *ideas* to the world, as any intellect that ever lighted it.

EDITOR OF THE "LIBRARY OF ROMANCE."

PREFACE.

This translation of Undine is from the fourth impression of the original, that of Berlin, 1826. It was made in the winter of 1835, and has since received such revision and improvement as the kindness of literary friends, as well as my own wish to do as little injustice to the Tale as I could, has enabled me to give it.

Undine is a beautifully imaginative Tale, a masterpiece in this department of German literature. With a very antique simplicity it combines the most picturesque wildness, unbroken interest, excellent principles, a peculiar vein of pleasantry, and even what we seldom look for in works of this kind, touches of genuine pathos. We are esteemed, and I presume justly, a less imaginative race than the people of Germany, still the spirit of truth and tenderness is nowhere wholly extinct.

I am gratified to perceive that some of the most popular writers of the day make mention of this fiction of Fouqué. But the most accurate appreciation I have seen of it, I find among those golden fragments of the richest of minds, the Specimens of the Table Talk of S. T. Coleridge. This is the passage to which I allude:— "Undine is a most excellent work. It shows the general want of any sense for the fine and the subtle in the public taste, that this Romance made no deep impression. Undine's character, before she receives a soul, is marvellously beautiful."

The author, to whom we are so much indebted for these Specimens *and other Literary Remains*, and to whom we hope to be still more *indebted, observes in a note*:— "Mr. Coleridge's admiration of this

little Romance was unbounded. He said there was something in Undine even beyond Scott,—that Scott's best characters and conceptions were *composed*, by which I understood him to mean that Bailie Nicol Jarvie, for example, was made up of old particulars, and received its individuality from the author's power of fusion, being in the result an admirable product, as Corinthian brass was said to be the conflux of the spoils of a city. But Undine, he said, was one and single in projection, and had presented to his imagination, what Scott had never done, an absolutely new idea."

This character being formed according to the principles of Rosicrucian philosophy, it has been suggested to me, that, "to enable the reader to understand and appreciate her story," I ought to prefix a sketch of that system to my translation, and I once thought of profiting by the suggestion. On reflection, however, I cannot but view the work as complete in itself. Whatever seems requisite, even for readers least conversant with such lore, Fouqué has contrived to incorporate, and I think very skilfully too, with the texture of his fable. See the developments of the eighth chapter. Everybody enjoys the delightful marvels of the Arabian Nights, marvels that have almost become numbered among the common-places of our experience; even children understand the machinery of genii, magicians, talismans, rings, lamps, and enchanted horses.

To this fourth edition, and it may be to an earlier, the author attached the following airy and graceful 'dedication:'

Vision of beauty, dear Undine,
Since, led by storied light,
I found you, mystic sprite,
How soothing to my heart your voice has been!

You press beside me, angel mild,
Soft-breathing all your woes,
And winning brief repose,—
A wayward, tender, timid child.

Still my guitar has caught the tone,
And from its gate of gold
Your whispered sorrows rolled,
Till through the world their sound has flown.

And many hearts your sweetness love,
  Though strange your freaks and state,
  And, while I sing your fate,
The wild and wondrous tale approve.

Now would they warmly, one and all,
  Your fortunes trace anew:
  Then, sweet, your way pursue,
And, fearless, enter bower and hall.

Greet noble knights with homage due;
  But greet, all-trusting there,
  The lovely German fair;
"Welcome," they cry, "the maiden true!"

And if toward *me* one dart a glance,
  Say: "He 's a loyal knight,
  Who serves you, ladies bright,—
Guitar and sword,—at tourney, feast, and dance."

The reader will allow me to say, in closing this advertisement, that, supported as well by my own feeling as by the judgment of Coleridge, I view Undine not only as a work of art, but as something far superior, an exquisite creation of genius. If I have failed to do justice to her peculiar traits, in thus introducing her to him in the costume of our language, it is not owing to want of admiration or of studiously endeavouring to be faithful to my trust; and, aware of the difficulty of presenting her the 'vision of beauty' that Fouqué 'found' her, he will forgive the fond impulse of my ambition. What welcome she may receive among us, it remains for the noble knights and lovely ladies of our country to show. She does not come as a stranger; she has already been once greeted with favour; and to all lovers of the imaginative,—to every "simple, affectionate, and wonder-loving heart,"—her fortunes are again committed.

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UNDINE.

CHAPTER I.

HOW A KNIGHT CAME TO A FISHERMAN'S COTTAGE.

ONCE on a beautiful evening, it may now be many hundred years ago, there was a worthy old fisherman who sat before his door mending his nets.

Now the corner of the world where he dwelt, was exceedingly picturesque. The green turf on which he had built his cottage, ran far out into a great lake; and this slip of verdure appeared to stretch into it as much through love of its clear waters, blue and bright, as the lake moved by a like impulse, strove to fold the meadow, with its waving grass and flowers, and the cooling shade of the trees, in its embrace of love. They seemed to be drawn toward each other, and the one to be visiting the other as a guest.

With respect to human beings, indeed, in this pleasant spot, after excepting the fisherman and his family, there were few or rather *none* to be met with. For in the background of the scene, toward the west and northwest, lay a forest of extraordinary wildness, which, owing to its sunless

gloom and almost impassable recesses, as well as to fear of the strange creatures and visionary illusions to be encountered in it, most people avoided entering, unless in cases of extreme necessity. The pious old fisherman, however, many times passed through it without harm, when he carried the fine fish, which he caught by his beautiful strip of land, to a great city lying only a short distance beyond the extensive forest.

Now the reason he was able to go through this wood with so much ease, may have been chiefly this, because he entertained scarcely any thoughts but such as were of a religious nature; and besides, every time he crossed the evil-reported shades, he used to sing some holy song with a clear voice and from a sincere heart.

Well, while he sat by his nets this evening, neither fearing nor devising evil, a sudden terror seized him, as he heard a rushing in the darkness of the wood, that resembled the trampling of a mounted steed, and the noise continued every instant drawing nearer and nearer to his little territory.

What he had fancied, when abroad in many a stormy night, respecting the mysteries of the forest, now flashed through his mind in a moment; especially the figure of a man of gigantic stature and snow-white appearance, who kept nodding his head in a portentous manner. Yes, when he raised his eyes toward the wood, the form came before him in perfect distinctness, as he saw the nodding man burst forth from the mazy web-work of leaves and branches. *But he immediately* felt emboldened, when he reflected that *nothing to give him* alarm had ever befallen him even in the *forest; and moreover*, that on this open neck of land the

evil spirit, it was likely, would be still less daring in the exercise of his power. At the same time, he prayed aloud with the most earnest sincerity of devotion, making use of a passage of the Bible. This inspired him with fresh courage; and soon perceiving the illusion, the strange mistake into which his imagination had betrayed him, he could with difficulty refrain from laughing. The white, nodding figure he had seen, became transformed, in the twinkling of an eye, to what in reality it was, a small brook, long and familiarly known to him, which ran foaming from the forest, and discharged itself into the lake.

But what had caused the startling sound, was a knight arrayed in sumptuous apparel, who beneath the shadows of the trees came riding toward the cottage. His doublet was of violet blue, embroidered with gold, and his scarlet cloak hung gracefully over it; on his cap of burnished gold waved red and violet-coloured plumes, and in his golden shoulder-belt flashed a sword, richly ornamented and extremely beautiful. The white barb that bore the knight, was more slenderly built than battle-horses usually are; and he touched the turf with a step so light and elastic, that the green and flower woven carpet seemed hardly to receive the slightest break from his tread. The old fisherman, notwithstanding, did not feel perfectly secure in his mind, although he was forced to believe, that no evil could be feared from an appearance so prepossessing; and therefore, as good manners dictated, he took off his hat on the knight's coming near, and quietly remained by the side of his nets.

When the stranger stopped, and asked whether he with his horse could have shelter and entertainment there for the

night, the fisherman returned answer: 'As to your horse, fair sir, I have no better stable for him than this shady meadow, and no better provender than the grass that is growing here. But with respect to yourself, you shall be welcome to our humble cottage,—to the best supper and lodging we are able to give you.'

The knight was well contented with this reception; and alighting from his horse, which his host assisted him to relieve from saddle and bridle, he let him hasten away to the fresh feeding-ground, and thus spoke: 'Even had I found you less hospitable and kindly disposed, my worthy old friend, you would still, I suspect, hardly have got rid of me to-day; for here, I perceive, a broad lake lies before us, and as to riding back into that wood of wonders, with the shades of evening deepening around me, may Heaven in its grace preserve me from the thought!'

'Pray, not a word of the wood, or of returning into it!' said the fisherman, and took his guest into the cottage.

There, beside the hearth, from which a frugal fire was diffusing its light through the clean dusky room, sat the fisherman's aged wife in a great chair. At the entrance of their noble guest, she rose and gave him a courteous welcome, but sat down again in her seat of honour, not making the slightest offer of it to the stranger. Upon this the fisherman said with a smile:

'You must not be offended with her, young gentleman, because she has not given up to you the best chair in the house; it is a custom among poor people to look upon this *as the privilege of the* aged.'

'*Why, husband!*' cried the old lady with a quiet smile,

'where can your wits be wandering? Our guest, to say the least of him, must belong to a Christian country, and how is it possible then, that so well-bred a young man, as he appears to be, could dream of driving old people from their chairs? Take a seat, my young master,' continued she, turning to the knight; 'there is still quite a snug little chair across the room there, only be careful not to shove it about too roughly, for one of its legs, I fear, is none of the firmest.'

The knight brought up the seat as carefully as she could desire, sat down upon it with gentlemanly good-humour, and it seemed to him for a moment, that he must be somehow related to this little household, and have just returned home from abroad.

These three worthy people now began to converse in the most friendly and familiar manner. In relation to the forest, indeed, concerning which the knight occasionally made some inquiries, the old man chose to know and say but little; at any rate he was of opinion, that slightly touching upon it, at this hour of twilight, was most suitable and safe; but of the cares and comforts of their home and their business abroad, the aged couple spoke more freely, and listened also with eager curiosity, as the knight recounted to them his travels, and how he had a castle near one of the sources of the Danube, and that his name was Sir Huldbrand of Ringstetten.

Already had the stranger, while they were in the midst of their talk, been aware at times of a splash against the little low window, as if some one were dashing water against it. The old man, every time he heard the noise, knit his brows with vexation; but at last, when the whole

sweep of a shower came pouring like a torrent against the panes, and bubbling through the decayed frame into the room, he started up indignant, rushed to the window, and cried with a threatening voice:

'Undine! will you never leave off these fooleries? not even to-day, when we have a stranger-lord with us in the cottage?'

All without now became still, only a low titter was just perceptible, and the fisherman said, as he came back to his seat: 'You will have the goodness, my honoured guest, to pardon this freak, and it may be a multitude more, but she has no feeling of evil or any thing improper. This mischievous Undine, to confess the truth, is our adopted daughter, and she stoutly refuses to give over this frolicsome childishness of hers, although she has already entered her eighteenth year. But in spite of this, as I said before, she is at heart one of the very best children in the world.'

'*You* may say so,' broke in the old lady, shaking her head,—'you can give a better account of her than I can. When you return home from fishing, or from selling your fish in the city, you may think her frolics very delightful. But to have her figuring about you the whole day long, and never, from morning to night, to hear her speak one word of sense; and then, as she grows older, instead of having any help from her in the family, to find her a continual cause of anxiety, lest her wild humours should completely ruin us,—that is quite a different affair, and enough at last to weary *out the patience* even of a saint.'

'*Well, well,*' replied the master of the house with a smile, '*you have your* trials with Undine, and I have mine

with the lake. The lake often beats down my dams, and breaks the meshes of my nets, but for all that I have a strong affection for it; and so have you in spite of your mighty crosses and vexations, for our graceful little child. Is it not true?'

'One cannot be very angry with her,' answered the old lady, as she gave her husband an approving smile.

That instant the door flew open, and a girl of slender form, almost a very miniature of woman, her hair flaxen and her complexion fair, in one word a blonde-like miracle of beauty, slipped laughingly in, and said: 'You have only been making a mock of me, father; for where now is the guest you mentioned?'

The same moment, however, she perceived the knight also, and continued standing before the comely young man in fixed astonishment. Huldbrand was charmed with her graceful figure, and viewed her lovely features with the more intense regard, as he imagined it was only her surprise that allowed him the opportunity, and that she would soon turn away from his gaze with double bashfulness. But the event was the very reverse of what he expected. For after now regarding him quite a long while, she became inspired with more confidence, moved nearer, knelt down before him, and, while she played with a gold medal, which he wore attached to a rich chain on his breast, exclaimed:

'Why, you beautiful, you friendly guest! how have you reached our poor cottage at last? Have you been obliged, for years and years, to wander about the world, before you *could catch one glimpse* of our nook? Do you come out *of that wild forest*, my lovely friend?'

The old woman was so prompt in her reproof, as to allow him no time to answer. She commanded the maiden to rise, show better manners, and go to her work. But Undine, without making any reply, drew a little footstool near Huldbrand's chair, sat down upon it with her netting, and said in a gentle tone:

'I will work here.'

The old man did as parents are apt to do with children, to whom they have been over-indulgent. He affected to observe nothing of Undine's strange behaviour, and was beginning to talk about something else. But this the little girl did not permit him to do. She broke in upon him, 'I have asked our kind guest, from whence he has come among us, and he has not yet answered me.'

'I come out of the forest, you lovely little vision,' Huldbrand returned, and she spoke again:

'You must also tell me how you came to enter that forest, so feared and shunned, and the marvellous adventures you met with there; for there is no escaping, I guess, without something of this kind.'

Huldbrand felt a slight shudder, on remembering what he had witnessed, and looked involuntarily toward the window, for it seemed to him, that one of the strange shapes, which had come upon him in the forest, must be there grinning in through the glass; but he discerned nothing except the deep darkness of night, which had now enveloped the whole prospect. Upon this, he became more collected, and was just on the point of beginning his account, when the *old man thus interrupted* him:

'Not so, sir knight; this is by no means a fit hour for such relations.'

But Undine, in a state of high excitement, sprang up from her little cricket, braced her beautiful arms against her sides, and cried, placing herself directly before the fisherman: 'He shall *not* tell his story, father? he shall not? But it is my will; he shall! he shall, stop him who may!'

Thus speaking, she stamped her little foot vehemently on the floor, but all with an air of such comic and good humoured simplicity, that Huldbrand now found it quite as hard to withdraw his gaze from her wild emotion, as he had before from her gentleness and beauty. The old man, on the contrary, burst out in unrestrained displeasure. He severely reproved Undine for her disobedience and her unbecoming carriage toward the stranger, and his good old wife joined him in harping on the same string.

By these rebukes Undine was only excited the more. 'If you want to quarrel with me,' she cried, 'and will not let me hear what I so much desire, then sleep alone in your smoky old hut!'—And swift as an arrow she shot from the door, and vanished amid the darkness of the night.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHAT MANNER UNDINE HAD COME TO THE FISHERMAN.

HULDBRAND and the fisherman sprang from their seats, and were rushing to stop the angry girl; but before they could reach the cottage door, she had disappeared in the cloud-like obscurity without, and no sound, not so much even as that of her light footstep, betrayed the course she had taken. Huldband threw a glance of inquiry toward his host: it almost seemed to him, as if the whole of the sweet apparition, which had so suddenly plunged again amid the night, were no other than a continuation of the wonderful forms, that had just played their mad pranks with him in the forest; but the old man muttered between his teeth:

'This is not the first time she has treated us in this manner. Now must our hearts be filled with anxiety, and our eyes find no sleep, the whole night; for who can assure us, in spite of her past escapes, that she will not some time or other come to harm, if she thus continue out in the dark and alone until daylight?'

'Then pray, for God's sake, father, let us follow her,' cried Huldbrand anxiously.

'*Wherefore should we?*' replied the old man; '*It would be a sin, were I to suffer you, all alone,* to search after the

foolish girl amid the lonesomeness of night; and my old limbs would fail to carry me to this wild rover, even if I knew to what place she has betaken herself.'

'Still we ought at least to call after her, and beg her to return,' said Huldbrand, and he began to call in tones of earnest entreaty: 'Undine! Undine! come back, come back!'

The old man shook his head, and said: 'All your shouting, however loud and long, will be of no avail; you know not as yet, Sir knight, what a self-willed thing the little wilding is.' But still, even hoping against hope, he could not himself cease calling out every minute, amid the gloom of night: 'Undine! ah dear Undine! I beseech you, pray come back,—only this once.'

It turned out, however, exactly as the fisherman had said. No Undine could they hear or see; and as the old man would on no account consent, that Huldbrand should go in quest of the fugitive, they were both obliged at last to return into the cottage. There they found the fire on the hearth almost gone out, and the mistress of the house, who took Undine's flight and danger far less to heart than her husband, had already gone to rest. The old man blew up the coals, put on kindling stuff and billets of wood, and by means of the renewed flame hunted for a jug of wine, which he brought and set between himself and his guest.

'You, Sir knight, as well as myself,' said he, 'are anxious on the silly girl's account, and it would be better I think, to spend part of the night in chatting and drinking, than keep *turning and turning* on our rush-mats, and trying in vain to *sleep. What is your opinion?*'

Huldbrand was well pleased with the plan; the fisherman pressed him to take the empty seat of honour, its worthy occupant having now left it for her couch; and they relished their beverage and enjoyed their chat, as two such good men and true ever ought to do. To be sure, whenever the slightest thing moved before the windows, or at times when even nothing was moving, one of them would look up and exclaim, 'There she comes!'—Then would they continue silent a few moments, and afterward, when nothing appeared, would shake their heads, breathe out a sigh, and go on with their talk.

But since they were both so pre-occupied in their minds, as to find it next to impossible to dwell upon any subject separate from Undine, the best plan they could devise was, that the old fisherman should relate, and the knight should hear, in what manner Undine had come to the cottage. So the fisherman, giving an account of the circumstances, began as follows:

'It is now about fifteen years, since I one day crossed the wild forest with fish for the city market. My wife had remained at home, as she was wont to do; and at this time for a reason of more than common interest, for although we were beginning to feel the advances of age, God had bestowed upon us an infant of wonderful beauty. It was a little girl, and we already began to ask ourselves the question, whether we ought not, for the advantage of the newcomer, to quit our solitude, and, the better to bring up this precious gift of Heaven, to remove to some more inhabited place. Poor people, to be sure, cannot in these cases do all you may think they ought, Sir knight; but still, gracious

God! every one must do as much for his children as he is able.

'Well, I went on my way, and this affair would keep running in my head: it put my mind into a perfect whirl. This tongue of land was most dear to me, and I shrunk from the thought of leaving it, when, amidst the bustle and broils of the city, I was obliged to reflect in this manner by myself; "In a scene of tumult like this, or at least in one not much more quiet, I too must soon take up my abode." But in spite of these feelings, I was far from murmuring against the kind providence of God; on the contrary, when I received this new blessing, my heart breathed a prayer of thankfulness too deep for words to express. I should also speak an untruth, were I to say, that any thing befel me, either on my passage through the forest to the city, or on my returning homeward, that gave me more alarm than usual, as at that time I had never seen any appearance there, which could terrify or annoy me. In those awful shades the Lord was ever with me, and I felt his presence as my best security.'

Thus speaking, he took his cap reverently from his bald crown, and continued to sit, for a considerable time, in a state of devout thoughtfulness. He then covered himself again, and went on with his relation:

'On this side the forest, alas! it was on this side, that woe burst upon me. My wife came wildly to meet me, clad in mourning apparel, and her eyes streaming with tears. "Gracious God!" I cried, "where's our child? Speak!"

"*With the Being* on whom you have called, dear husband," *she answered*; and we now entered the cottage

together, weeping in silence.—I looked for the little corse, almost fearing to find what I was seeking; and then it was I first learnt how all had happened.

'My wife had taken the little one in her arms, and walked out to the shore of the lake. She there sat down by its very brink; and while she was playing with the infant, as free from all fear as she was full of delight, it bent forward on a sudden, seeing something in the water, a perfect fairy wonder of beauty. My wife saw her laugh, the dear angel, and try to catch the image in her tiny hands; but in a moment,—with a motion swifter than sight,—she sprung from her mother's arms, and sunk in the lake, the watery glass into which she had been gazing. I searched for our lost darling again and again; but it was all in vain; I could nowhere find the least trace of her.

'Well, our little one was gone. We were again childless parents, and were now, on the same evening, sitting together by our cottage hearth. We had no desire to talk, even would our tears have permitted us. As we thus sat in mournful stillness, gazing into the fire, all at once we heard something without,—a slight rustling at the door. The door flew open, and we saw a little girl, three or four years old, and more beautiful than I am able to tell you, standing on the threshold richly dressed and smiling upon us. We were struck dumb with astonishment, and I knew not for a time, whether the tiny form were a real human being, or a mere mockery of enchantment. But I soon *perceived* water dripping from her golden hair and rich garments, and that the pretty child had been lying in the water, and stood in immediate need of our help.

"Wife," said I, "no one has been able to save our child for us; still we doubtless ought to do for others, what would make ourselves the happiest parents on earth, could any one do us the same kindness."

'We undressed the little thing, put her to bed, and gave her something to drink: at all this she spoke not a word, but only turned her eyes upon us, eyes blue and bright as sea or sky, and continued looking at us with a smile.

'Next morning, we had no reason to fear, that she had received any other harm than her wetting, and I now asked her about her parents, and how she could have come to us. But the account she gave, was both confused and incredible. She must surely have been born far from here, not only because I have been unable, for these fifteen years, to learn any thing of her birth, but because she then spoke, and at times continues to speak, many things of so very singular a nature that we neither of us know, after all, whether she may not have dropped among us from the moon. Then, her talk runs upon golden castles, crystal domes, and Heaven knows what extravagances beside. What of her story, however, she related with most distinctness, and what appeared to have in it some shadow of likelihood, was this, that while she was once taking a sail with her mother on the great lake, she fell out of the boat into the water; and that when she first recovered her senses, she was here under our trees, where the gay scenes of the shore filled her with delight.

'*We now had another* care weighing upon our minds,

and one that caused us no small perplexity and uneasiness. We of course very soon determined to keep and bring up the child we had found, in place of our own darling that had been drowned; but who could tell us whether she had been baptized or not? She herself could give us no light on the subject. When we asked her the question, she commonly made answer, that she well knew she was created for God's praise and glory; and that as to what might promote the praise and glory of God, she was willing to let us determine.

'My wife and I reasoned in this way: "If she has not been baptized, there can be no use in putting off the ceremony; and if she has been, it is more dangerous, in regard to the duties of religion, to do too little than too much."

'Taking this view of our difficulty, we now endeavoured to hit upon a good name for the child, since while she remained without one, we were often at a loss, in our familiar talk, to know what to call her. We at length concluded, that Dorothea would be most suitable for her, as I had somewhere heard it said, that this name signified *a Gift of God*, and surely she had been sent to us by Providence as a gift, to comfort us in our misery. She on the contrary, would not so much as hear Dorothea mentioned: she insisted, that as she had been named Undine by her parents, Undine she ought still to be called. It now occurred to me, that this was a *heathenish name*, to be found in no calendar, and I *resolved to ask* the advice of a priest in the city. He

too would hear nothing of the name, Undine, even for a moment; and yielding to my urgent request, he came with me through the enchanted forest, in order to perform the rite of baptism here in my cottage.

'The little maid stood before us so prettily adorned and with such an air of gracefulness, that the heart of the priest softened at once in her presence; and she had a way of coaxing him so adroitly, and even of braving him at times with so merry a queerness, that he at last remembered nothing of his many objections to the name of Undine.

'Thus then was she baptized Undine; and during the holy ceremony, she behaved with great propriety and gentleness, wild and wayward as at other times she invariably was. For in this my wife was quite correct, when she mentioned the care, anxiety, and vexation the child has occasioned us. If I should relate to you'——

At this moment the knight interrupted the fisherman, with a view to direct his attention to a deep sound as of a rushing flood, which had caught his ear, within a few minutes, between the words of the old man. And now the waters came pouring on with redoubled fury before the cottage windows. Both sprang to the door. There they saw, by the light of the now risen moon, the brook which issued from the wood, rushing wildly over its banks, and whirling onward with it both stones and branches of trees in its rapid course. The storm, as if awakened by the uproar, burst forth from the clouds, whose immense masses of vapour coursed over the moon

with the swiftness of thought;* the lake roared beneath the wind, that swept the foam from its waves; while the trees of this narrow peninsula groaned from root to top-most branch, as they bowed and swung above the torrent.

Is this trumpet-note of crime, and the doom of crime, the last 'sound' we are to hear from 'the Pyrenees'? we hope not.

'Undine! in God's name, Undine!' cried the two men in an agony. No answer was returned; and now, regardless of every thing else, they hurried from the cottage, one in this direction, the other in that, searching and calling.

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* Some of these images may remind the reader of the vivid pictures of the Buccaneer, that rich contribution to our permanent literature.

"The scud is driving wildly overhead."

"The seas run high;
Their white tops, flashing thro' the night,
Give to the eager, straining eye,
A wild and shifting light."

CHAPTER III.

HOW THEY FOUND UNDINE AGAIN.

THE longer Huldbrand sought Undine beneath the shades of night, and failed to find her, the more anxious and confused he became. The impression, that she was a mere phantom of the forest, gained a new ascendency over him;—indeed, amid the howling of the waves and the tempest, the crashing of the trees, and so entire a transformation of the scene, that it discovered no resemblance to its former calm beauty, he was tempted to view the whole peninsula, together with the cottage and its inhabitants, as little more than some mockery of his senses; but still he heard, afar off, the fisherman's anxious and incessant shouting, "UNDINE!" and also his aged wife, who, with a loud voice and a strong feeling of awe, was praying and chanting hymns amid the commotion.

At length, when he drew near to the brook which had overflowed its banks, he perceived by the moonlight, that it had taken its wild course directly in front of the haunted forest, so as to change the peninsula *into an island.*

'Merciful God!' he breathed to himself, 'if Undine has ventured a step within that fearful wood, what will become of her?—perhaps it was all owing to her sportive and wayward spirit, because I could give her no account of my adventures there;—and now the stream is rolling between us, she may be weeping alone on the other side in the midst of spectral horrors!'

A shuddering groan escaped him, and clambering over some stones and trunks of overthrown pines, in order to step into the impetuous current, he resolved, either by wading or swimming, to seek the wanderer on the further shore. He felt, it is true, all the dread and shrinking awe creeping over him, which he had already suffered by daylight among the now tossing and roaring branches of the forest. More than all, a tall man in white, whom he knew but too well, met his view, as he stood grinning and nodding on the grass beyond the water: but even monstrous forms like this, only impelled him to cross over toward them, when the thought rushed upon him, that Undine might be there alone, and in the agony of death.

He had already grasped a strong branch of a pine, and stood supporting himself upon it in the whirling current, against which he could with difficulty keep himself erect; but he advanced deeper in with a courageous spirit. That instant a gentle voice of warning cried near him: 'Do not venture, do not venture! that OLD *MAN, the* STREAM, is too tricksy to be trusted!'—He *knew the soft* tones of the voice; and while he stood

as it were entranced, beneath the shadows which had now duskily veiled the moon, his head swum with the swell and rolling of the waves, as he saw them momentarily rising above his knee. Still he disdained the thought of giving up his purpose.

'If you are not really there, if you are merely gamboling round me like a mist, may I too bid farewell to life, and become a shadow like you, dear, dear Undine!' Thus calling aloud, he again moved deeper into the stream. 'Look round you, ah pray look round you, beautiful young stranger! why rush on death so madly!' cried the voice a second time close by him; and looking side-ways, as the moon by glimpses unveiled its light, he perceived a little island formed by the flood, and, reclined upon its flowery turf, beneath the high branches of embowering trees, he saw the smiling and lovely Undine.

O with what a thrill of delight, compared with the suspense and pause of a moment before, the young man now plied his sturdy staff! A few steps freed him from the flood, that was rushing between himself and the maiden, and he stood near her on the little spot of green-sward, in secret security, covered by the primeval trees that rustled above them. Undine had partially risen, within her tent of verdure, and she now threw her arms around his neck, so that she gently drew him down upon the soft seat by her side.

'Here you shall tell me your story, my handsome *friend,' she breathed* in a low whisper; 'here the cross *old people cannot* disturb us. And, besides, our roof

of leaves here will make quite as good a shelter, it may be, as their poor cottage.'

'It is heaven itself,' cried Huldbrand; and folding her in his arms, he kissed the lovely and affectionate girl with fervour.

The old fisherman, meantime, had come to the margin of the stream, and he shouted across to the young lovers: 'Why how is this, sir knight! I received you with the welcome which one true-hearted man gives to another; and now you sit there caressing my foster-child in secret, while you suffer me in my anxiety to wander through the night in quest of her.'

'Not till this moment did I find her myself, old father,' cried the knight across the water.

'So much the better,' said the fisherman; 'but now make haste, and bring her over to me upon firm ground.'

To this, however, Undine would by no means consent. She declared, that she would rather enter the wild forest itself with the beautiful stranger, than return to the cottage, where she was so thwarted in her wishes, and from which the handsome knight would soon or late go away. Then closely embracing Huldbrand, she sung the following verse with the warbling sweetness of a bird:

'A Rill would leave its misty vale,
And fortunes wild explore;
Weary at length it reached the main,
And sought its vale no more.'

The old fisherman wept bitterly at her song, but his *emotion seemed* to awaken little or no sympathy in

her. She kissed and caressed her new friend, who at last said to her: 'Undine, if the distress of the old man does not touch your heart, it cannot but move mine. We ought to return to him.'

She opened her large blue eyes upon him in perfect amazement, and finally spoke with a slow and lingering accent: 'If you think so,—it is well; all is right to me, which you think right. But the old man over there must first give me his promise, that he will allow you, without objection, to relate what you saw in the wood, and —— Well, other things will settle themselves.'

'Come, only come!' cried the fisherman to her, unable to utter another word. At the same time, he stretched his arms wide over the current toward her, and, to give her assurance that he would do what she required, nodded his head: this motion caused his white hair to fall strangely over his face, and Huldbrand could not but remember the nodding white man of the forest. Without allowing anything, however, to produce in him the least confusion, the young knight took the beautiful girl in his arms, and bore her across the narrow channel, which the stream had torn away between her little island and the solid shore. The old man fell upon Undine's neck, and found it impossible either to express his joy, or to kiss her enough; even the ancient dame came up, and embraced the recovered girl most cordially. Every word of censure *was carefully avoided*; the more so indeed, as even *Undine, forgetting her* waywardness, almost overwhelmed

her foster-parents with caresses and the prattle of tenderness.

When at length, after they were able to realize the joy of recovering their child, they seemed to have come to themselves, morning had already dawned, opening to view and brightening the waters of the lake; the tempest had become hushed; the small birds sung merrily on the moist branches.

As Undine now insisted upon hearing the recital of the knight's promised adventures, the aged couple good-humouredly consented to gratify her wish. Breakfast was brought out beneath the trees, which stood behind the cottage toward the lake on the north, and they sat down to it with delighted hearts,—Undine lower than the rest (since she would by no means allow it to be otherwise) at the knight's feet on the grass. These arrangements being made, Huldbrand began his story in the following manner.

CHAPTER IV.

OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO THE KNIGHT IN THE FOREST.

'It is now about eight days, since I rode into the free imperial city, which lies yonder on the farther side of the forest. Soon after my arrival, a splendid tournament and running at the ring took place there, and I spared neither my horse nor my lance in the encounters.

'Once, while I was pausing at the lists, to rest from the brisk exercise, and was handing back my helmet to one of my attendants, a female figure of extraordinary beauty caught my attention, as, most magnificently attired, she stood looking on at one of the balconies. I learnt, on making inquiry of a person near me, that the name of the young lady was Bertalda, and that she was a foster-daughter of one of the powerful dukes of this country. She too, I observed, was gazing at me, and the consequences were such, as we young knights are wont to experience: whatever success in riding I *might have* had before, I was now favoured *with still better fortune.* That evening I was Bertal-

da's partner in the dance, and I enjoyed the same distinction during the remainder of the festival.'

A twinge of pain in his left hand, as it hung carelessly beside him, here interrupted Huldbrand's relation, and drew his eye to the part affected. Undine had fastened her pearly teeth, and not without some keenness too, upon one of his fingers, appearing at the same time very gloomy and displeased. On a sudden, however, she looked up in his eyes with an expression of tender melancholy, and whispered almost inaudibly:

'You blame me for being rude, but you are yourself the cause.'

She then covered her face, and the knight, strangely embarrassed and thougtful, went on with his story:

'This lady Bertalda of whom I spoke, is of a proud and wayward spirit. The second day I saw her, she pleased me by no means so much as she had the first, and the third day still less. But I continued about her, because she showed me more favour than she did any other knight; and the result of my indiscretion was, that I playfully asked her to give me one of her gloves.

'When you have entered the haunted forest all alone,' said she; 'when you have explored its wonders, and brought me a full account of them the glove is yours.'

'As to getting her glove, it was of no importance to me whatever, but the word had been spoken, and *no honourable* knight would permit himself to be reminded *of such* a proof of valour a second time.'

'I thought,' said Undine, interrupting him, 'that she felt an affection for you.'

'It did appear so,' replied Huldbrand.

'Well!' exclaimed the maiden, laughing, 'this is beyond belief; she must be very stupid. To drive from her one who was dear to her! And, worse than all, into that ill-omened wood! The wood and its mysteries, for all I should have cared, might have waited a long while.'

'Yesterday morning, then,' pursued the knight, smiling brightly upon Undine, 'I set out from the city, my enterprise before me. The early light lay rich upon the verdant turf. It shone so rosy on the slender boles of the trees, and there was so merry a whispering among the leaves, that in my heart I could not but laugh at people, who feared meeting anything to terrify them in a spot so delicious. "I shall soon trot through the forest, and as speedily return," I said to myself in the overflow of joyous feeling; and ere I was well aware, I had entered deep among the green shades, while of the plain that lay behind me, I was no more able to catch a glimpse.

'Then the conviction for the first time impressed me, that in a forest of so great extent I might very easily become bewildered, and that this perhaps might be the only danger, which was likely to threaten those who explored its recesses. So I made a halt, and turned myself in the direction of the sun, which had meantime risen somewhat higher; and while I was looking up to observe it, I saw something black among

the boughs of a lofty oak. My first thought was, "It is a bear!" and I grasped my weapon; the object then accosted me from above in a human voice, but in a tone most harsh and hideous: "If I overhead here do not gnaw off these dry branches, wiseacre Sir Noodle, what shall we have to roast you with, when midnight comes?" And with that it grinned, and made such a rattling with the branches, that my courser became mad with affright and rushed furiously forward with me, before I had time to see distinctly what sort of a devil's beast it was.'

'You must not name it,' said the old fisherman, crossing himself; his wife did the same without speaking a word; and Undine, while her eye sparkled with delight, looked at the knight and said: 'The best of the story is, however, that as yet they have not actually roasted you. But pray make haste, my handsome young friend. I long to hear more.'

The knight then went on with his adventures: 'My horse was so wild, that he well nigh rushed with me against limbs and trunks of trees. He was dripping with sweat, through terror, heat, and the violent straining of his muscles. Still he refused to slacken his career. At last, altogether beyond my control, he took his course directly up a stony steep; when suddenly a tall white man flashed before me, and threw himself athwart the route my mad steed was taking. At this apparition he shuddered with new affright, and stopt *trembling. I took* this chance of recovering my com*mand of him,* and now for the first time perceived,

that my deliverer, so far from being a white *man*, was only a brook of silver brightness, foaming near me in its descent from the hill, while it crossed and arrested my horse's course with its rush of waters.'

'Thanks, thanks, dear BROOK,' cried Undine, clapping her little hands. But the old man shook his head, and, deeply musing, looked vacantly down before him.

'Hardly had I well settled myself in my saddle, and got the reins in my grasp again,' Huldbrand pursued, 'when a wizard-like dwarf of a man was already standing at my side, diminutive and ugly beyond conception, his complexion, of a brownish yellow, and his nose scarcely of less magnitude than all the rest of him. The fellow's mouth was slit almost from ear to ear, and he showed his teeth with a simpering smile of idiot courtesy, while he overwhelmed me with bows and scrapes innumerable. The farce now becoming excessively irksome, I thanked him in the fewest words I could well use, turned about my still trembling charger, and purposed either to seek another adventure, or, should I meet with none, to take my way back to the city; for the sun, during my wild chase, had passed the meridian, and was now hastening toward the west. But this villain of a manikin sprung at the same instant, and with a turn as rapid as lightning stood before my horse again. 'Clear the way there!' I cried fiercely; 'the beast is wild, and will make *nothing* of running over you.'

"*He will, will he!*" cried the imp with a snarl, and

snorting out a laugh still more frightfully idiotic, "pay me, first pay what you owe me,—I stopt your fine little nag for you; without my help, both you and he would be now sprawling below there in that stony ravine: Hu! from what a horrible plunge I've saved you."

"Well, pray don't stretch your mouth any wider," said I, "but take your money and off, though every word you say is false. It was the brook there, you miserable thing, and not you, that saved me."—And at the same time I dropt a piece of gold into his wizard cap, which he had taken from his head while he was begging before me.

'I then trotted off, and left him; but, to make bad worse, he screamed after me, and on a sudden, with inconceivable quickness, he was close by my side. I started my horse into a gallop; he galloped on with me, impossible for him as it appeared; and with this strange movement, half ludicrous and half horrible, forcing at the same time every limb and feature into distortion, he held up the gold piece and screamed at every leap: "Counterfeit! false! false coin! counterfeit!" and such was the strange sound that issued from his hollow breast, you would have supposed, that at every scream he must have tumbled upon the ground dead. All this while, his disgustful red tongue hung lolling from his mouth.

'Discomposed at the sight, I stopt and asked: "*What do you* mean by this screaming? Take another *piece of gold,* take two, but leave me."

He then began again his hideous salutations of courtesy, and snarled out as before: "Not gold, it shall not be gold, my smart young gentleman; I have too much of that trash already, as I will show you in quick-time."

'At that moment, and thought itself could not have been more instantaneous, I seemed to have acquired new powers of sight. I could see through the solid green plain, as if it were green glass, and the smooth surface of the earth were round as a globe; and within it I saw crowds of goblins,* who were pursuing their pastime, and making themselves merry with silver and gold. They were tumbling and rolling about, heads up and heads down; they pelted one another in sport with the precious metals, and with irritating malice blew gold dust in one another's eyes. My odious companion stood half within and half without; he ordered the others to reach him up a vast quantity of gold; this he showed to me with a laugh, and then flung it again ringing and chinking down the measureless abyss.

'After this contemptuous disregard of gold, he held up the piece I had given him, showing it to his brother goblins below, and they laughed themselves half dead at a bit so worthless, and hissed me. At last, raising their fingers all smutched with ore, they pointed them at me in scorn, and wilder and wilder, and thicker and thicker, and madder and madder, the

* Kobolds or gnomes.

crowd were clambering up to where I sat gazing at these wonders. Then terror seized me, as it had before seized my horse. I gave him both spurs to the quick; and how far he rushed with me through the forest, during this second of my wild heats, it is impossible to say.

'At last, when I had now come to a dead halt again, the cool of evening was around me. I caught the gleam of a white foot-path through the branches of the trees; and presuming it would lead me out of the forest toward the city, I was desirous of working my way into it; but a face perfectly white and indistinct, with features ever changing, kept thrusting itself out and peering at me between the leaves. I tried to avoid it; but wherever I went, there too appeared the unearthly face. I was maddened with rage at this interruption, and determined to drive my steed at the appearance full-tilt, when such a cloud of white foam came rushing upon me and my horse, that we were almost blinded and glad to turn about and escape. Thus from step to step it forced us on, and ever aside from the foot-path, leaving us, for the most part, only one direction open. But when we advanced in this, it kept following close behind us, yet did not occasion the smallest harm or inconvenience.

'When at times I looked about me at the form, I perceived, that the white face which had splashed *upon us its* shower of foam, was resting on a body *equally white* and of more than gigantic size. Many

a time too I received the impression, that the whole appearance was nothing more than a wandering stream or torrent, but respecting this I could never attain to any certainty. We both of us, horse and rider, became weary, as we shaped our course according to the movements of the white man, who continued nodding his head at us, as if he would say: "Perfectly right! perfectly right!"—And thus, at length, we came out here at the edge of the wood, where I saw the fresh turf, the waters of the lake, and your little cottage, and where the tall white man disappeared.'

'Well, Heaven be praised that he is gone,' cried the old fisherman; and he now began to consider how his guest could most conveniently return to his friends in the city. Upon this, Undine began tittering to herself, but so very low that the sound was hardly perceivable. Huldbrand, observing it, said: 'I had hoped you would see me remain here with pleasure: why then do you now appear so happy, when our talk turns upon my going away?'

'Because you cannot go away,' answered Undine. 'Pray make a single attempt; try with a wherry, with your horse, or alone, as you please, to cross that forest-stream which has burst its bounds. Or rather, make no trial at all, for you would be dashed to pieces by the stones and trunks of trees, which you see driven on with such violence. And as to the lake, *I am well* acquainted with that; even my father

dares not venture out with his wherry far enough to help you.'

Huldbrand rose, smiling, in order to look about, and observe whether the state of things were such, as Undine had represented it to be; the old man accompanied him, and the maiden, in mockery, went gamboling and playing her antics beside them. They found all in fact, just as Undine had said, and that the knight, whether willing or not willing, must submit to remaining on the island, so lately a peninsula, until the flood should subside.

When the three were now returning to the cottage, after their ramble, the knight whispered the little girl in her ear: "Well, dear Undine, how is it with you? Are you angry on account of my remaining?"

'Ah,' she pettishly replied, 'not a word of that. If I had not bitten you, who knows what fine things you would have put into your story about Bertalda!'

CHAPTER V.

HOW THE KNIGHT LIVED ON THE POINT OF LAND, NOW ENCIRCLED BY THE LAKE.

At some period of your life, my dear reader, after manifold triumphs and repulses in the crusade of the world, you may have reached a situation where you were happy; that love for the calm of our own fireside, which we all feel as an affection born with us, again rose within you; you imagined that your home would again bloom forth, as from a cherished grave, with all the flowers of childhood, the purest and most impassioned love; and that in such a spot it must be delightful to dwell, and build your tabernacle for life.

Whether you were mistaken in this persuasion, and afterward made a severe expiation for your error of judgment, it suits not my purpose to inquire, and you would be unwilling yourself, it may be, to be saddened by a recollection so ungrateful. But again awake within you that foretaste of bliss, so inexpressibly sweet, that angelic salutation of peace, and you will be able, perchance, to realize something of the knight Huldbrand's happiness, the tender visions of his heart, while he remained on the point of land, now surrounded by the lake.

He frequently observed, and no doubt with heart-felt satisfaction, that the forest stream continued every day to swell and roll on with a more impetuous sweep; that, by tearing away the earth, it scooped out a broader and broader channel; and that the time of his seclusion on the island became, in consequence, more and more extended. Part of the day he wandered about with an old cross-bow, which he found in a corner of the cottage and had repaired, in order to shoot the water-fowl that flew over; and all that he was lucky enough to hit, he brought home for a good roast in the kitchen. When he came in with his booty, Undine seldom failed to greet him with a scolding, because he had cruelly deprived her dear merry friends of life, as they were sporting above in the blue ocean of the air; nay more, she often wept bitterly, when she viewed the water-fowl dead in his hand. But at other times, when he returned without having shot any, she gave him a scolding equally serious, since, owing to his indolent strolling and awkward handling of the bow, they must now put up with a dinner of pickerel and crawfish. Her playful taunts ever touched his heart with delight; the more so, as she afterward strove to make up for her pretended ill-humour with that most endearing of prattle, of which lovers alone are able to understand the value.

In this familiarity of the young people, their aged friends saw a resemblance to the feelings of their own youth: they appeared to look upon them as betroth-

ed, or even as a young married pair, that lived with them in their age, to afford them assistance on their island, now torn off from the mainland. His retired situation, too, strongly impressed the young Huldbrand with the feeling, that he was already Undine's bridegroom. It seemed to him, as if, beyond those encompassing floods, there were no other world in existence, or at any rate as if he could never cross them, and again associate with the world of other men; and when at times his grazing steed raised his head and neighed to him, seemingly inquiring after his knightly achievements and reminding him of them, or when his coat of arms sternly shone upon him from the embroidery of his saddle, and the caparisons of his horse, or when his sword happened to fall from a nail, on which it was hanging in the cottage, and flashed on his eye as it slipped from the scabbard in its fall,—he quieted the dubious suggestions of his mind by saying to himself; "Undine cannot be a fisherman's daughter; she is, in all probability, a native of some remote region, and a member of some illustrious family."

There was one thing, indeed, to which he had a strong aversion: this was hearing the old dame reprimanding Undine. The wild girl, it is true, commonly laughed at the reproof, making no attempt to conceal the extravagance of her mirth; but it appeared to him like touching his own honour; and still he found it impossible to blame the aged wife of the fisherman, since Undine always deserved at least ten

times as many reprimands as she received: so he continued to feel in his heart an affectionate tenderness for them all, even for the ancient mistress of the house, and his whole life flowed on in the calm stream of contentment.

But still there came some interruption at last. The fisherman and the knight had been accustomed at dinner, and also in the evening, when the wind roared without, as it rarely failed to do towards night, to enjoy together a flask of wine. But now their whole stock, which the fisherman had from time to time brought with him from the city, was at last exhausted, and they were both quite out of humour at the circumstance. That day Undine laughed at them excessively, but they were not disposed to join in her pleasantries with the same gaiety as usual. Toward evening she went out of the cottage, to escape, as she said, the sight of two such lengthened and tiresome faces.

While it was yet twilight, some appearances of a tempest seemed to be again mustering in the sky, and the waves already rushed and roared around them: the knight and the fisherman sprung to the door in terror, to bring home the maiden, remembering the anguish of that night, when Huldbrand had first entered the cottage. But Undine met them at the same moment, clapping her little hands in high glee.

'*What will* you give me,' she cried, 'to provide *you with wine*? or rather, you need not give me any *thing,*' she continued; 'for I am already satisfied, if

you look more cheerful, and have a livelier flow of spirits, than throughout this last most wearisome day. Only come with me; the forest stream has driven ashore a cask; and I will be condemned to sleep a whole week, if it is not a wine-cask.'

The men followed her, and actually found, in a bushy cove of the shore, a cask, which inspired them with as much joy as if they were sure it contained the generous old wine for which they were thirsting. They first of all, and with as much expedition as possible, rolled it toward the cottage; for a heavy shower was again rising in the west, and they could discern the waves of the lake, in the fading light, lifting their white foaming heads, as if looking out for the rain, which threatened every instant to pour upon them. Undine helped them as much as she was able; and as the shower, with a roar of wind, came suddenly sweeping on in rapid pursuit, she raised her finger with a merry menace toward the dark mass of clouds, and cried:

'You cloud, you cloud, have a care!—beware how you wet us; we are some way from shelter yet.'

The old man reproved her for this sally, as a sinful presumption; but she laughed to herself with a low tittering, and no one suffered any evil from her wild behaviour. Nay more, what was beyond their expectation, they reached their comfortable hearth unwet, with their prize secured; but the moment the cask had been broached, and proved to contain wine of a remarkably fine flavour, then the rain first poured unre-

strained from the black cloud, the tempest raved through the tops of the trees, and swept far over the billows of the deep.

Having immediately filled several bottles from the cask, which promised them a supply for a long time, they drew round the glowing hearth; and comfortably secured from the tempest, they sat tasting the flavour of their wine, and bandying their pleasantries.

As reflection returned upon him, the old fisherman suddenly became extremely grave, and said: 'Ah, great God! here we sit, rejoicing over this rich gift, while he to whom it first belonged, and from whom it was wrested by the fury of the stream, must there also, it is more than probable, have lost his life.'

'His fate, I trust, was not quite so melancholy as that,' said Undine, while, smiling, she filled the knight's cup to the brim.

But he exclaimed: 'By my unsullied honour, old father, if I knew where to find and rescue him, no exposure to the night, nor any thought of peril, should deter me from making the attempt. But I give you all the assurance I am able to give, that provided I again reach an inhabited country, I will find out the owner of this wine or his heirs, and make double and triple reimbursement.'

The old man was gratified with this assurance; he gave the knight a nod of approbation, and now drained *his cup* with an easier conscience and a more *delicate relish.*

Undine, however, said to Huldbrand: 'As to the

repayment and your gold, you may do whatever you like. But what you said about your venturing out, and searching, and exposing yourself to danger, appears to me far from wise. I should cry my very eyes out, should you perish there on such a wild jaunt; and is it not true, that you would prefer staying here with me and the good wine?'

'Most assuredly,' answered Huldbrand, smiling.

'Well,' replied Undine, 'you spoke unwisely then. For charity begins at home: our neighbour ought not to be our first thought; and whatever is a calamity to him, would be one in our own case also.'

The mistress of the house turned away from her, sighing and shaking her head, while the fisherman forgot his wonted indulgence toward the graceful little girl, and thus reproved her:

'That sounds exactly as if you had been brought up by heathens and Turks;' and he finished his reproof by adding: 'May God forgive both me and you,—unfeeling child.'

'Well, say what you will, this is what *I* think and feel,' replied Undine, 'be they who they may that brought me up,—and how can a thousand of your words help it?'

'Silence!' exclaimed the fisherman, in a voice of stern rebuke; and she, who with all her wild spirit was extremely alive to fear, shrunk from him, moved close up to Huldbrand, trembling, and breathed this question *in the lowest* tone possible:

'*Are you also* angry, dear friend?'

The knight pressed her soft hand, and tenderly stroked her locks. He was unable to utter a word; for his vexation, arising from the old man's severity toward Undine, closed his lips; and thus the two couple sat opposite to each other, at once heated with anger and in embarrassed silence.

CHAPTER VI.

A WEDDING.

In the midst of this painful stillness, a low knocking was heard at the door, which struck them all with dismay. For there are times when a slight circumstance, coming unexpectedly upon us, startles us like something supernatural. But here it was a further source of alarm, that the enchanted forest lay so near them, and that their place of abode seemed at present inaccessible to the visit of any thing human. While they were looking upon one another in doubt, the knocking was again heard, accompanied with a deep groan. The knight sprang to seize his sword. But the old man said in a low whisper:

'If it be what I fear it is, no weapon of yours can protect us.'

Undine in the meanwhile went to the door, and cried with the firm voice of fearless displeasure: 'Spirits of the earth! if mischief be your aim, Kühleborn shall teach you better manners.'

The terror of the rest was increased by this wild speech; they looked fearfully upon the girl, and Hulde-

brand was just recovering presence of mind enough to ask what she meant, when a voice reached them from without:

'I am no spirit of the earth, though a spirit still in its earthly body. You that are within the cottage there, if you fear God and would afford me assistance, open your door to me.'

By the time these words were spoken, Undine had already opened it; and the lamp throwing a strong illumination upon the stormy night, they perceived an aged priest without, who stept back in terror, when his eye fell on a sight so unexpected, the vision of a little damsel of such exquisite beauty. Well might he think there must be magic in the wind, and witchcraft at work, where a form of such surpassing loveliness appeared at the door of so humble a dwelling. So he lifted up his voice in prayer:

'Let all good spirits praise the Lord God!'

'I am no spectre,' said Undine, with a smile. 'Do I look so very frightful? And you cannot but bear me witness yourself, that I am far from shrinking terrified at your holy words. I too have knowledge of God, and understand the duty of praising him; every one, to be sure, has his own way of doing this, and this privilege he meant we should enjoy, when he gave us being. Walk in, father; you will find none but worthy people here.'

The holy man came bowing in, and cast round a *glance of* scrutiny, wearing at the same time a very *placid and* venerable air. But water was dropping

from every fold of his dark garments, from his long white beard, and the white locks of his hair. The fisherman and the knight took him to another apartment, and furnished him with a change of raiment, while they handed his own suit into the room they had left for the females to dry. The aged stranger thanked them in a manner the most humble and courteous, but on the knight's offering him his splendid cloak to wrap round him, he could not be persuaded to take it, but chose instead an old gray overcoat that belonged to the fisherman.

They then returned to the common apartment. The mistress of the house immediately offered her great chair to the priest, and continued urging it upon him, till she saw him fairly in possession of it. 'You are old and exhausted,' said she, 'and are moreover a man of God.'

Undine shoved under the stranger's feet her little cricket, on which at all other times she used to sit near to Huldbrand, and showed herself, in thus promoting the comfort of the worthy old man, in the highest degree gentle and amiable. On her paying him these little attentions, Huldbrand whispered some raillery in her ear, but she replied gravely:

'He is a minister of that Being, who created us all, and holy things are not to be treated with lightness.'

The knight and the fisherman now refreshed the priest with food and wine; and when he had somewhat recovered his strength and spirits, he began to

relate how he had the day before set out from his cloister, which was situated afar off beyond the great lake, in order to visit the bishop, and acquaint him with the distress, into which the cloister and its tributary villages had fallen, owing to the extraordinary floods. After a long and wearisome wandering, on account of the rise of the waters, he had been this day compelled toward evening to procure the aid of a couple of boatmen, and cross over an arm of the lake which had burst its usual boundary.

'But hardly,' continued he, 'had our small ferry-boat touched the waves, when that furious tempest burst forth, which is still raging over our heads. It seemed as if the billows had been waiting our approach, only to rush upon us with a madness the more wild. The oars were wrested from the grasp of my men in an instant; and shivered by the resistless force, they drove farther and farther out before us upon the waves. Unable to direct our course, we yielded to the blind power of nature, and seemed to fly over the surges toward your remote shore, which we already saw looming through the mist and foam of the deep. Then it was at last, that our boat turned short from its course, and rocked with a motion that became more and more wild and dizzy: I know not whether it was overset, or the violence of the motion threw me overboard. In my agony and struggle at the *thought of* a near and terrible death, the waves bore *me onward,* till I was cast ashore here beneath the *ves of your* island.'

'Yes, an island!' cried the fisherman. 'A short time ago it was only a point of land. But now, since the forest-stream and lake have become all but mad, it appears to be entirely changed.'

'I observed something of it,' replied the priest, 'as I stole along the shore in the obscurity; and hearing nothing around me but a sort of wild uproar, I perceived at last, that the noise came from a point, exactly where a beaten foot-path disappeared. I now caught the light in your cottage, and ventured hither, where I cannot sufficiently thank my heavenly Father, that, after preserving me from the waters, he has also conducted me to such pious people as you are; and the more so, as it is difficult to say, whether I shall ever behold any other persons in this world except you four.'

'What mean you by those words?' asked the fisherman.

'Can you tell me, then, how long this commotion of the elements will last?' replied the spiritual man. 'And the years of my pilgrimage are many. The stream of my life may easily sink into the ground and vanish, before the overflowing of that forest stream shall subside. And indeed, taking a general view of things, it is not impossible, that more and more of the foaming waters may rush in between you and yonder forest, until you are so far removed from the rest of the world, that your small fishing-canoe *may be incapable* of passing over, and the inhabitants

of the continent entirely forget your age amid the dissipation and diversions of life.'

At this melancholy foreboding, the old lady shrunk back with a feeling of alarm, crossed herself, and cried: 'May God forbid!'

But the fisherman looked upon her with a smile, and said: 'What a strange being is man! Suppose the worst to happen: our state would not be different, at any rate your own would not, dear wife, from what it is at present. For have you, these many years, been farther from home than the border of the forest? And have you seen a single human being beside Undine and myself?—It is now only a short time since the coming of the knight and the priest. They will remain with us, even if we do become a forgotten island; so after all you will derive the best advantage from the disaster.'

'I know not,' replied the ancient dame,' it may be so; still it is a dismal thought, when brought fairly home to the mind, that we are forever separated from mankind, even though, in fact, we never do know nor see them."

'Then *you* will remain with us, then you will remain with us!' whispered Undine in a voice scarcely audible and half singing, while with the intense fervour of the heart she moved more and more closely to Huldbrand's side. But he was immersed in the *deep and strange* musings of his own mind. The *region on the* farther side of the forest-river, since *the last* words of the priest, seemed to have been

withdrawing farther and farther, in dim prospective, from his view; and the blooming Island on which he lived, grew green and smiled more freshly before the eye of his mind. His bride glowed like the fairest rose; not of this obscure nook only, but even of the whole wide world, and the priest was now present.

Beside these hopes and reveries of love, another circumstance influenced him: the mistress of the family was directing an angry glance at Undine, because, even in the presence of their spiritual director, she was leaning so fondly on the knight; and it seemed as if she was on the point of breaking out in harsh reproof. Then was the resolution of Huldbrand taken; his heart and mouth were opened; and, turning toward the priest, he said, 'Father, you here see before you an affianced pair, and if this maiden and these aged and worthy people of the island have no objection, you shall unite us this very evening.'

The aged couple were both exceedingly surprised. They had often, it is true, anticipated an event of this nature, but as yet they had never mentioned it; and now when the knight made the attachment known, it came upon them like something wholly new and unexpected. Undine became suddenly grave, and cast her eyes upon the floor in a profound reverie, while the priest made inquiries respecting the circumstances of their acquaintance, and asked the old people whether they gave their consent to the union. After a great number of questions and answers, the affair was arranged to the satisfaction of all; and the mistress

of the house went to prepare the bridal apartment for the young couple, and also, with a view to grace the nuptial solemnity, to seek for two consecrated tapers, which she had for a long time kept by her.

The knight in the meanwhile busied himself about his golden chain, for the purpose of disengaging two of its links, that he might make an exchange of rings with his bride. But when she saw his object she started from her trance of musing, and exclaimed:

'Not so! my parents by no means sent me into the world so perfectly destitute; on the contrary, they foresaw, even at so early a period, that such a night as this would come.'

Thus speaking, she was out of the room in a moment, and a moment after returned with two costly rings, of which she gave one to her bridegroom, and kept the other for herself. The old fisherman was beyond measure astonished at this; and his wife, who was just re-entering the room, was even more surprised than he, that neither of them had ever seen these jewels in the child's possession.

'My parents,' said Undine, 'made me sew these trinkets to that beautiful raiment, which I wore the very day I came to you. They also charged me, on no account whatever, to mention them to any one before my nuptial evening. At the time of my coming, therefore, I took them off in secret, and have kept them concealed to the present hour.'

The priest now cut short all further questioning and *wondering*, while he lighted the consecrated tapers,

placed them on a table, and ordered the bridal pair to stand opposite to him. He then pronounced the few solemn words of the ceremony, and made them one; the elder couple gave the younger their blessing; and the bride, slightly trembling and thoughtful, leaned upon the knight.

The priest then spoke plainly and at once: 'You are strange people after all: for why did you tell me that you were the only inhabitants of the island? So far is this from being true, I have seen, the whole time I have been performing the ceremony, a tall, stately man, in a white mantle, stand opposite to me, looking in at the window. He must be still waiting before the door, if peradventure you would invite him to come in.'

'God forbid!' cried the old lady, shrinking back; the fisherman shook his head without opening his lips, and Huldbrand sprang to the window. It appeared to *him* that he could still discern some vestige of a form, white and indistinct as a vapour, but it soon disappeared in the gloom. He convinced the priest that he must have been mistaken in his impression; and now, inspired with freedom and familiarity of perfect confidence, they all sat down together round a bright and comfortable hearth.

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT FURTHER HAPPENED ON THE EVENING OF THE WEDDING.

Before the nuptial ceremony, and during its performance, Undine had shown a modest gentleness and maidenly reserve; but it now seemed as if all the wayward freaks that effervesced within her, were foaming and bursting forth with an extravagance only the more bold and unrestrained. She teased her bridegroom, her foster-parents, and even the priest, whom she had but just now revered so highly, with all sorts of childish tricks and vagaries; and when the ancient dame was about to reprove her too frolicsome spirit, the knight, by a few serious and expressive words, imposed silence upon *her* by calling Undine his wife.

The knight was himself, indeed, just as little pleased with Undine's childish behaviour as the rest: but still, all his winking, hemming, and expressions of censure were to no purpose. It is true, whenever the bride *observed* the dissatisfaction of her husband,—and this *occasionally* happened,—she became more quiet, placed *herself* beside him, stroked his face with caressing

fondness, whispered something smilingly in his ear, and in this manner smoothed the wrinkles that were gathering on his brow. But the moment after, some wild whim would make her resume her antic movements, and all went worse than before.

The priest then spoke in a kind, although serious tone: 'My pleasant young friend, surely no one can witness your playful spirit without being diverted; but remember betimes so to attune your soul, that it may produce a harmony ever in accordance with the soul of your wedded bridegroom.'

'Soul!' cried Undine, with a laugh, nearly allied to one of derision; 'what you say has a remarkably pretty sound, and for most people, too, it may be a very instructive rule and profitable caution. But when a person has no soul at all, how, I pray you, can such attuning be then possible? And this in truth is just my condition.'

The priest was much hurt, but continued silent in holy displeasure, and turned away his face from the maiden in sorrow. She, however, went up to him with the most winning sweetness, and said:

'Nay, I entreat you, first listen to some particulars before you frown upon me in anger; for your frown of anger is painful to me, and by no means ought you to give pain to a creature, that has itself done nothing injurious to you. Only have patience with me, and I *will explain* to you every word of what I *meant.*'

It was evident that she had come to the resolution

to give a full account of herself, when she suddenly faltered, as if seized with an inward shuddering, and burst into a passion of tears. They were none of them able to understand the intenseness of her feelings, and with mingled emotions of fear and anxiety, they gazed on her in silence. Then wiping away her tears, and looking earnestly at the priest, she at last said:

'There must be something lovely, but at the same time something most awful, about a SOUL. In the name of God, holy man, were it not better that we never shared a gift so mysterious?'

Again she paused and restrained her tears, as if waiting for an answer. All in the cottage had risen from their seats, and stept back from her with horror. She, however, seemed to have eyes for no one but the holy man: a fearful curiosity was painted on her features, and this made her emotion appear terrible to the others.

'Heavily must the soul weigh down its possessor,' she pursued, when no one returned her any answer, 'very heavily! for already its approaching image overshadows me with anguish and mourning. And, alas! I have till now been so merry and light-hearted!'— And she burst into another flood of tears, and covered her face with her veil.

The priest, going up to her with a solemn look, *now addressed* himself to her, and conjured her by *the name of* God most holy, if any evil or spirit of *evil possessed* her, to remove the light covering from

her face. But she sunk before him on her knees, and repeated after him every sacred expression he uttered, giving praise to God, and protesting that she wished the well-being of the whole world.'

The priest then spoke to the knight: 'Sir bridegroom, I leave you alone with her whom I have united to you in marriage. So far as I can discover there is nothing of evil in her, but assuredly much that is wonderful. What I recommend to you in domestic life is—prudence, love, and fidelity.'

Thus speaking he left the apartment, and the fisherman with his wife followed him, crossing themselves.

Undine had sunk upon her knees; she uncovered her face and exclaimed, while she looked fearfully round upon Huldbrand: 'Alas, you will now refuse to regard me as your own; and still I have done nothing evil, poor unhappy child!' She spoke these words with a look so infinitely sweet and touching, that her bridegroom forgot both the confession that had shocked, and the mystery that had perplexed him; and hastening to her, he raised her in his arms. She smiled through her tears, and that smile was like the dawn playing upon a small stream. 'You cannot desert me!' she whispered, with a confiding assurance, and stroked the knight's cheeks with her little soft hands. He was thus in some degree withdrawn from those terrible apprehensions, that still lay lurking in the *recesses of his* soul, and were persuading him *that he had been* married to a fairy, or some spiteful *and mischievous* being of the spirit-world; but, after

all, only this single question, and that almost unawares, escaped from his lips:

'Dearest Undine, pray tell me this one thing; what was it you meant by 'spirits of earth' and 'Kühleborn' when the priest stood knocking at the door?'

'Mere fictions! mere tales of children!' answered Undine, laughing, now quite restored to her wonted gaiety. 'I first awoke your anxiety with them, and you finally awoke mine. This is the end of the story and of our nuptial evening.'

'Nay, not exactly that,' replied the enamoured knight, extinguishing the tapers, and a thousand times kissing his beautiful and beloved bride, while, lighted by the moon that shone brightly through the windows, he bore her into their own bridal apartment.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DAY AFTER THE WEDDING.

The fresh light of morning awoke the young married pair. Undine bashfully hid her face beneath their covering, and Huldbrand lay lost in silent reflection. Whenever during the night he had fallen asleep, strange and horrible dreams of spectres had disturbed him; and these shapes, grinning at him by stealth, strove to disguise themselves as beautiful females; and from beautiful females they all at once assumed the appearance of dragons. And when he started up, aroused by the intrusion of these hideous forms, the moonlight shone pale and cold before the windows without; he looked affrighted at Undine, in whose arms he had fallen asleep, and she was reposing in unaltered beauty and sweetness beside him. Then pressing her rosy lips with a light kiss, he again fell into a slumber, only to be awakened by new terrors.

When he had now perfectly awoke, and well considered all the circumstances of this connection, he reproached himself for any doubt that could lead him into error in regard to his lovely wife. He also

earnestly begged her pardon for the injustice he had done her, but she only gave him her fair hand, heaved a sigh from the depth of her heart, and remained silent. But a glance of fervent tenderness, an expression of the soul beaming in her eyes, such as he had never witnessed there before, left him in undoubting assurance, that Undine was conscious of no evil design against him whatever.

He then rose with a serene mind, and, leaving her, went to the common apartment, where the inmates of the house had already met. The three were sitting round the hearth with an air of anxiety about them, as if they feared trusting themselves to raise their voice above a low apprehensive undertone. The priest appeared to be praying in his inmost spirit, with a view to avert some fatal calamity. But when they observed the young husband come forth so cheerful, a brighter hope rose within them, and dispelled the cloudy traces that remained upon their brows; yes, the old fisherman began to be facetious with the knight, but in a manner perfectly becoming, so that his aged wife herself could not help smiling with great good humour.

Undine had in the meantime got ready, and now entered the door; when all were on the point of rushing to meet her, and yet all continued standing in perfect admiration, so changed and at the same time so familiar was the young woman's appearance. The priest, with paternal affection beaming from his countenance, first went up to her, and as he raised his hand to pronounce a blessing, the beautiful bride, trem-

bling with devotion, sunk on her knees before him; she begged his pardon, in terms both respectful and submissive, for any foolish things she might have uttered the evening before, and entreated him, in a pathetic tone, to pray for the welfare of her soul. She then rose, kissed her foster-parents, and, after thanking them for all the kindness they had shown her, said:

'O, I now feel in my inmost heart, how much, how infinitely much you have done for me, you dear, dear friends of my childhood!'

At first she was wholly unable to tear herself away from their affectionate caresses; but the moment she saw the good old mother busy in getting breakfast, she went to the hearth, applied herself to cooking the food and putting it on the table, and would not suffer her aged friend to take the least share in the work.

She continued in this frame of spirit the whole day; calm, kind, attentive;—at the same time a little mistress of a family, and a tender, modest young woman. The three who had been longest acquainted with her, expected every instant to see her capricious spirit break out in some whimsical change or sportive vagary. But their fears were quite unnecessary. Undine continued as mild and gentle as an angel. The priest found it all but impossible to remove his eyes from her, and he often said to the bridegroom:

'The bounty of Heaven, sir, making me its unworthy instrument, entrusted to you last evening an *invaluable treasure*; regard and cherish it as you ought

to do, and it will promote your temporal and eternal welfare.'

Toward evening, Undine was hanging upon the knight's arm with lowly tenderness, while she drew him gently out before the door, where the setting sun shone richly over the fresh grass, and upon the high, slender boles of the trees. Her emotion was visible: the dew of sadness and love swam in her eyes, while a tender and fearful secret hovered upon her lips, but sighs, and those scarcely perceptible, were all that made known the wish of her heart. She led her husband farther and farther onward without speaking. When he asked her questions she replied only with looks, in which, it is true, there appeared to be no immediate answer to his inquiries, but yet a whole heaven of love and timid attachment. Thus they reached the margin of the swollen forest-stream, and the knight was astonished to see it gliding away with so gentle a murmuring of its waves, that no vestige of its former swell and wildness was now discernible.

'By morning it will be wholly drained off,' said the beautiful woman with an accent of weeping, 'and you will then be able to travel, without any thing to hinder you, whithersoever you will.'

'Not without you, dear Undine, replied the knight laughing; 'for pray remember, even were I disposed to leave you, both the church and the spiritual powers, the emperor and the laws of the realm, would require the *fugitive to be* seized and restored to you.'

'*All this* depends on you, all depends on you;'

whispered his little companion, half weeping and half smiling. 'But I still feel sure, that you will not leave me; I am in truth too fondly attached to you to fear that misery. Now bear me over to that little island, which lies before us. There shall the decision be made. I could easily, indeed, slip through that mere rippling of the water without your aid, but it is so grateful to rest in your arms; and should you determine to put me away, I shall have sweetly rested in them once more, . . . for the last time.'

Huldbrand was so full of strange anxiety and emotion, that he knew not what answer to make her. He took her in his arms and carried her over, now first realizing the fact, that this was the same little island, from which he had borne her back to the old fisherman, the first night of his arrival. On the further side, he placed her upon the soft grass, and cherished with a lover's fondness the hope of sitting near his beautiful burden; but she said to him, 'not here,—if you please, there over against me. I shall read my doom in your eyes, even before your lip pronounce it: now listen very attentively to what I shall relate to you. And she began:

'You must know, my dear love, that there are beings in the elements, which bear the strongest resemblance to the human race, and which, at the same time, but seldom become visible to you. The wonderful salamanders sparkle and sport amid the flames; *deep in the earth* the meagre and malicious gnomes *pursue their revels*; the forest-spirits belong to the air,

and wander in the woods; while in the seas, rivers, and streams live the wide-spread race of water spirits. These last, beneath resounding domes of crystal, through which the sky appears with sun and stars, inhabit a region of light and beauty; lofty coral-trees glow with blue and crimson fruits in their gardens; they walk over the pure sand of the sea, among exquisitely variegated shells, and amid whatever of beauty the old world possessed, such as the present is no more worthy to enjoy: creations which the floods covered with their secret veils of silver; and now the noble monuments sparkle below, stately and solemn,* and bedewed by the water, which loves them and calls forth from their crevices delicate moss-flowers and enwreathing tufts of sedge.

'Now the nation that dwell there, are very fair and lovely to behold, for the most part more beautiful than human beings. Many a fisherman has been so fortunate, as to catch a view of a delicate maiden of the waters, while she was floating and singing upon the deep. He then spread to remotest shores the fame of her beauty, and to such wonderful females men are wont to give the name of Undines. But

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*No reader of English poetry need be reminded of Southey's admirable description of the City of Baly in his Curse of Kehama.

"In sunlight and sea-green,
The thousand palaces were seen
Of that proud city, whose superb abodes
Seemed reared by giants for the immortal gods.
How silent and how beautiful they stand,
Like things of nature!"

what need of saying more?—You, my dear husband, now actually behold an Undine before you.'

The knight would have persuaded himself, that his lovely wife was under the influence of one of her odd whims, and that she was only amusing herself and him with her extravagant inventions. He wished it might be so. But with whatever emphasis he said this to himself, he still could not credit the hope for a moment; a strange shivering shot through his soul; unable to utter a word, he gazed upon the sweet speaker with a fixed eye. She shook her head in distress, heaved a sigh from her full heart, and then proceeded in the following manner:

'In respect to the circumstances of our life, we should be far superior to yourselves, who are another race of the human family,—for we also call ourselves human beings, as we resemble them in form and features,—had we not one evil peculiar to ourselves. Both we, and the beings I have mentioned as inhabiting the other elements, vanish into air at death and go out of existence, spirit and body, so that no vestige of us remains; and when you hereafter awake to a purer state of being, we shall remain where sand, and sparks, and wind, and waves remain. We of course have no souls; the element moves us, and, again, is obedient to our will, while we live, though it scatters us like dust, when we die; and as we have nothing to trouble us, we are as merry as nightingales, little goldfishes, and other pretty children of nature.

'But all beings aspire to rise in the scale of existence higher than they are. It was therefore the wish of my father, who is a powerful water-prince in the Mediterranean Sea, that his only daughter should become possessed of a soul, although she should have to endure many of the sufferings of those who share that gift.

'Now the race to which I belong, have no other means of obtaining a soul, than by forming with an individual of your own the most intimate union of love. I am now possessed of a soul, and I, the very soul itself, thank you, dear Huldbrand, with a warmth of heart beyond expression, and never shall I cease to thank you, unless you render my whole future life miserable. For what will become of me, if you avoid and reject me? I was not permitted, however, to retain you as my own by artifice. And should you decide to cast me off, then do it now, and return alone to the shore. I will plunge into this brook, where my uncle will receive me; my uncle, who here in the forest, far removed from his other friends, passes his strange and solitary existence. But he is powerful, as well as revered and beloved by many great rivers; and as he brought me hither to our friends of the lake, a light-hearted and laughing child, he will also restore me to the home of my parents, a woman, possessing a soul, full of affection, and heir to suffering.'

She was about to add something more, when Huld*brand, with* the most heartfelt tenderness and love, clasp-

ed her in his arms, and again bore her back to the shore. There, amid tears and kisses, he first swore never to forsake his affectionate wife, and esteemed himself even more happy than Pygmalion, for whom Venus gave life to his beautiful statue, and thus changed it into a beloved wife. Supported by his arm, and cherishing within her the sweet confidence of affection, Undine returned to the cottage; and now she first realized with her whole heart, how little cause she had for regretting what she had left, the crystal palaces of her mysterious father.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW THE KNIGHT TOOK HIS YOUNG WIFE WITH HIM.

NEXT morning, when Huldbrand awoke from slumber, and perceived that his beautiful wife was not by his side, he began to give way again to his wild imaginations: these represented to him his marriage, and even the charming Undine herself, as only a shadow without substance, a mere illusion of enchantment. But she entered the door at the same moment, kissed him, seated herself on the bed by his side, and said:

'I have been out somewhat early this morning, to see whether my uncle keeps his word. He has already restored the waters of the flood to his own calm channel, and he now flows through the forest, a rivulet as before, in a lonely and dreamlike current. His friends too, both of the water and the air, have resumed their usual peaceful tenor; all in this region will again proceed with order and tranquillity; and you can travel homeward without fear of the flood, whenever you choose.'

It seemed to the mind of Huldbrand, that he must be wrapt in some reverie or waking dream, so little was he able to understand the nature of his wife's strange rela-

tive. Notwithstanding this, he made no remark upon what she had told him, and her infinite sweetness soon lulled every misgiving and discomfort to rest.

Some time afterward, while he was standing with her before the door, and surveying the verdant point of land with its boundary of bright waters, such a feeling of bliss came over him in this cradle of his love, that he exclaimed:

'Shall we then, so early as to-day, begin our journey? Why should we? It is probable, that abroad in the world we shall find no days more delightful, than those we have spent in this little asylum, so secret and so secure. Let us remain here, and enjoy two or three more of its glorious sunsets.'

'Just as my lord shall command,' replied Undine meekly. 'Only we must remember, that our aged friends will, at all events, think of my departure with pain; and should they now, for the first time, discover the true soul in me, and how fervently I can now love and honour them, their feeble eyes would surely become blind with weeping. As yet, they consider my present calm and exemplary conduct as of no better promise than my former occasional quietness,— merely the calm of the lake just while the air remains tranquil, — and they will now become as much accustomed to cherish a little tree or flower, as they have been to cherish me. Let me not then make known to them this newly bestowed, this love-inspired heart, at *the very moment* they must lose it for this world; and

how could I conceal what I have gained, if we continued longer together?'

Huldbrand yielded to her representation, and went to the aged couple to confer with them respecting his journey, on which however he proposed to set out that very hour. The priest offered himself as a companion of the young married pair; and, after their taking a short farewell, he held the bridle, while the knight lifted his beautiful wife upon his horse; and with rapid step they crossed the dry channel with her toward the forest. Undine wept in silent but intense emotion; the old people, as she moved away, were more clamorous in the expression of their grief. They appeared to feel, at this moment of separation, a presentiment of what they were losing in their affectionate foster-daughter.

The three travellers had reached the thickest shades of the forest without interchanging a word. It would have been a picturesque sight, in that hall of leafy verdure, to see the figure of this lovely female sitting on the noble and richly ornamented steed, on her right hand the venerable priest in the white garb of his order, on her left the blooming young knight, clad in splendid raiment of scarlet, gold, and violet, girt with a sword that flashed in the sun, and attentively walking beside her. Huldbrand had no eyes but for his wife; Undine, who had dried her tears of tenderness, had no eyes but for him; and they soon entered into the mute and *voiceless* converse of looks and gestures, from which *after some time* they were awakened by the low dia-

course, which the priest was holding with a fourth traveller, who had meanwhile joined them unobserved.

He wore a white gown, resembling in form the dress of the priests' order, except that his hood hung very low over his face, and that the whole drapery floated in such wide folds around him, as obliged him every moment to gather it up and throw it over his arm, or by some management of this sort to get it out of his way, and still it did not seem in the least to incommode him in his movement. When the young couple became aware of his presence, he was saying:

'And so, venerable Sir, many as have been the years I have dwelt here in this forest, I have never received the name of hermit in your sense of the word. For, as I said before, I know nothing of penance, and I think too, that I have no particular need of it. Do you ask me why I am so attached to the forest? It is because its scenery is so peculiarly picturesque, and affords me so much pastime, when, in my floating white garments, I pass through its world of leaves and dusky shadows; — and then a sweet sunbeam glances down upon me, at times, before I think of it.'

'You are a very singular man,' replied the priest, 'and I should like to have a more intimate acquaintance with you.'

'And who then may you be yourself, to pass from one thing to another?' inquired the stranger.

'I am called father Heilmann,' answered the holy man, 'and I am from the cloister of our Lady of the Salutation, beyond the lake.'

'Well, well,' replied the stranger, 'my name is Kühleborn, and were I a stickler for the nice distinctions of rank, I might with equal propriety require you to give me the title of noble lord of Kühleborn, or free lord* of Kühleborn; for I am as free as the birds in the forest, and, it may be, a trifle more so. For example, I now have something to tell that young lady there.' And before they were aware of his purpose, he was on the other side of the priest, close to Undine, and stretching himself high into the air, in order to whisper something in her ear. But she shrunk from him in terror, and exclaimed:

'I have nothing more to do with you.'

'Ho, ho,' cried the stranger with a laugh, 'what sort of a marriage have you made, then, so monstrous and genteel, since you no longer know your own relations? Have you no recollection then of your uncle Kühleborn, who so faithfully bore you on his back to this region?'

'However that may be,' replied Undine, 'I entreat you never to appear in my presence again. I am now afraid of you; and will not my husband fear and forsake me, if he sees me associate with such strange company and kindred?'

'You must not forget, my little niece,' said Kühleborn, 'that I am with you here as a conductor; otherwise those madcap spirits of the earth, the gnomes that *haunt this forest*, would play you some of their *mischievous pranks*. Let me therefore still accompany

* Baron.

you in peace; even the old priest there had a better recollection of me, than you appear to have, for he just now assured me, that I seemed to be very familiar to him, and that I must have been with him in the ferry-boat, out of which he tumbled into the waves. He certainly did see me there, for I was no other than the water-spout that tore him out of it, and kept him from sinking, while I safely wafted him ashore to your wedding.'

Undine and the knight turned their eyes upon father Heilmann; but he appeared to be moving forward, just as if he were dreaming or walking in his sleep, and no longer to be conscious of a word that was spoken. Undine then said to Kühleborn: 'I already see yonder the end of the forest. We have no further need of your assistance, and nothing now gives us alarm but yourself. I therefore beseech you, by our mutual love and good-will, to vanish and allow us to proceed in peace.'

Kühleborn seemed to be transported with fury at this: he darted a frightful look at Undine, and grinned fiercely upon her. She shrieked aloud, and called her husband to protect her. The knight sprung round the horse as swift as lightning, and, brandishing his sword, struck at Kühleborn's head. But, instead of severing it from his body, the sword merely flashed through a torrent, which rushed foaming near them from a lofty cliff; and with a splash, which much resembled in sound a burst of laughter, the stream all at once poured upon them, and gave them a thorough wetting. The priest, as if suddenly awaking from a trance, coolly observed:

'This is what I have been some time expecting, because the brook has descended from the steep so close beside us, — though at first sight, indeed, it appeared to resemble a man, and to possess the power of speech.'

As the waterfall came rushing from its crag, it distinctly uttered these words in Huldbrand's ear: 'Rash knight! valiant knight! I am not angry with you; I have no quarrel with you; only continue to defend your charming little wife with the same spirit, you bold knight! you rash blade!'

After advancing a few steps farther, the travellers came out upon open ground. The imperial city lay bright before them; and the evening sun, which gilded its towers with gold, kindly dried their garments that had been so completely drenched.

CHAPTER X.

HOW THEY LIVED IN THE CITY.

The sudden disappearance of the young knight, Huldbrand of Ringstetten, had occasioned much remark in the imperial city, and no small concern among those of the people, who, as well on account of his expertness in tourney and dance as in consequence of his mild and amiable manners, had become attached to him. His attendants were unwilling to quit the place without their master, although not a soul of them had been courageous enough to follow him into the fearful recesses of the forest. They remained therefore at their public house, in the indulgence of idle hope, as men are wont to do, and, by the expression of their fears, kept the fate of their lost lord fresh in remembrance.

Now when the violent storms and floods had been observed immediately after his departure, the destruction of the handsome stranger became all but certain: even Bertalda had quite openly discovered her sorrow, *and detested herself* for having induced him to take *that fatal excursion* into the forest. Her foster-parents,

the duke and dutchess, had meanwhile come to take her away, but Bertalda persuaded them to remain with her until some certain news of Huldbrand should be obtained, whether he were living or dead. She endeavoured also to prevail upon several young knights, who were assiduous in courting her favour, to go in quest of the noble adventurer in the forest. But she refused to pledge her hand as the reward of the enterprise, because she still cherished, it might be, a hope of its being claimed by the returning knight; and no one would consent, for a glove, a ribband, or even a kiss, to expose his life to bring back a rival so very dangerous.

When Huldbrand now made his sudden and unexpected appearance, his attendants, the inhabitants of the city, and almost all the people rejoiced; we must acknowledge, indeed, that this was not the case with Bertalda; for although it might be quite a welcome event to others, that he brought with him a wife of such exquisite loveliness, and father Heilmann as a witness of their marriage, Bertalda could not but view the affair with grief and vexation. She had in truth become attached to the young knight with her whole soul, and then her mourning for his absence, or supposed death, had been more unreservedly shown, than she could now have wished.

But notwithstanding all this, she conducted herself *like a prudent* woman in circumstances of such delicacy, *and lived* on the most friendly terms with Undine, *whom the* whole city looked upon as a princess, that

Huldbrand had rescued in the forest from some evil enchantment. Whenever any one questioned either herself or her husband relative to surmises of this nature, they had wisdom enough to remain silent, or wit enough to evade the enquiries. The lips of father Heilmann had been sealed in regard to idle gossip of every kind, and besides, on Huldbrand's arrival, he had immediately returned to his cloister; so that people were obliged to rest contented with their own wild conjectures, and even Bertalda herself ascertained nothing more of the truth than others.

In addition to all this, Undine daily regarded this young lady with increasing fondness. 'We must have been heretofore acquainted with each other,' she often used to say to her, 'or else there must be some mysterious connection between us; for it is incredible, that one individual so perfectly without cause, I mean without some deep and secret cause, should be so fondly attached to another, as I have been to you from the first moment of our meeting.'

And even Bertalda could not deny, that she felt a confiding impulse, an attraction of tenderness, toward Undine, much as she deemed this fortunate rival the cause of her bitterest disappointment. Under the influence of this mutual regard, they found means to persuade, the one her foster-parents, and the other her husband, to defer the day of separation to a period more and more remote; nay more, they had already *begun to talk of* a plan for Bertalda's accompanying *Undine to Castle* Ringstetten, near one of the sources

of the Danube, and spending some considerable time with her.

Once on a fine evening, while they were promenading the city by starlight, they happened to be talking over their scheme just as they passed the high trees that bordered the public walk. The young married pair, though it was somewhat late, had called upon Bertalda to invite her to share their enjoyment; and all three proceeded familiarly up and down beneath the dark blue heaven, not seldom interrupted in their converse by the admiration, which they could not but bestow upon the magnificent fountain in the middle of the square, and upon the wonderful rush and shooting upward of its water. All was sweet and soothing to their minds; among the shadows of the trees stole in glimmerings of light from the adjacent houses; a low murmur as of children at play, and of other persons who were enjoying their walk, floated around them; so lonely were they, and sharing at the same time so much of social happiness, under a serene sky and amid the living world, that whatever had appeared difficult by day, now became smooth and easy of its own accord, and the three friends could no longer see the slightest cause for hesitation in regard to Bertalda's taking the journey.

At that instant, while they were just appointing the day of their departure, a tall man approached them from the middle of the square, bowed respectfully to the *company*, and spoke something in the young bride's *ear.* Though displeased with the interruption and its

cause, she walked aside a few steps with the stranger, and both began to whisper, as it seemed, in a foreign tongue. Huldbrand thought he recognized the strange man of the forest; and he gazed upon him with a look so intense and immoveable, that he neither heard nor answered the astonished inquiries of Bertalda. All at once Undine clapped her hands with delight, and turned back from the stranger, laughing: he, frequently shaking his head, retired with a hasty step and discontented air, and descended into the fountain. Huldbrand now felt perfectly certain, that his conjecture was correct, but Bertalda asked:

'What then, dear Undine, did the master of the fountain wish to say to you?'

Undine secretly laughed within herself, and made answer: 'The day after to-morrow, my dear child, when the anniversary of your name-day* returns, you shall be informed.' And this was all she could be prevailed upon to disclose. She merely asked Bertalda to dinner on the appointed day, and requested her to invite her foster-parents; and soon afterward they separated.

* A literary friend, from whose kindness I have derived the best aid in revising and correcting my version, informs me that this term "refers to a German custom of celebrating, not only the birth-day, but also the name-day, that is, the day which in the almanac bears the person's Christian name. The old almanacs contained a name for each day in the year, being either *the name of a saint* or some other remarkable personage in *history.*"

'Kühleborn?' said Huldbrand to his lovely wife with an inward shudder, when they had taken leave of Bertalda, and were now going home through the darkening streets.

'Yes, it was he,' answered Undine, 'and he would have wearied me with stupid warnings and forebodings without end. But in the midst of his senseless trash, what was altogether the reverse of his intention, he delighted me with a most wholesome piece of news. If you, my dear lord and husband, wish me to acquaint you with it now, you need only command me, and I will freely and from my heart tell you all without reserve. But would you confer upon your Undine a very, very peculiar pleasure, only wait till the day after to-morrow, and then you too shall have your share of the surprise.'

The knight was quite willing to gratify his wife, in regard to what she had requested with so beautiful a spirit; and this spirit she discovered yet more, for while she was that night falling asleep, she murmured to herself with a smile: 'How she will rejoice and be astonished at what her master of the fountain has told me,—the dear, happy Bertalda!'

CHAPTER XI.

FESTIVAL OF BERTALDA'S NAME-DAY.

THE company were sitting at dinner; Bertalda, adorned with jewels and flowers without number, the presents of her foster-parents and friends, and resembling some goddess of Spring, sat beside Undine and Huldbrand at the head of the table. When the sumptuous repast was ended, and the dessert was placed before them, permission was given that the doors should be left open: this was in accordance with the good old custom in Germany, that the common people might enjoy the privilege of seeing the splendour and sharing the festivity of their superiors. Among these spectators the servants carried round cake and wine.

Huldbrand and Bertalda waited with secret impatience for the promised explanation, and never, except when they could not well help it, removed their eyes from Undine. But the beautiful woman still continued silent, and merely smiled to herself with secret and heartfelt satisfaction. All who were made acquainted with the promise she had given, could perceive that she was *every moment on* the point of revealing a secret, which *she felt to be of* an exciting nature; and yet, as chil-

dren sometimes delay tasting their choicest dainties, she still withheld the communication, with a denial, that made it the more desired. Bertalda and Huldbrand partook of the same delightful feeling, while in anxious hope they were expecting the unknown disclosure, which they were to receive from the lips of their friend.

At this moment, several of the company pressed Undine to give them a song. This appeared to her to be quite a well-timed request, and, ordering her lute to be brought, she sung the following words:

'Morning so bright,
Wild flowers so gay,
Where high grass so dewy
Crowns the wavy lake's border.

'On the meadow's verdant bosom,
What glimmers there so white?
Have wreaths of snowy blossoms,
Soft-floating, fallen from heaven?

'Ah, see! a tender infant!—
It plays with flowers, unwitting;
It strives to grasp morn's golden beams.—
O where, sweet stranger, where's your home?
Afar from unknown shores,
The waves have wafted hither
This helpless little one.

'Nay, clasp not, tender darling,
With tiny hand the flowers;
No hand returns the pressure,
The flowers are strange and mute.

They clothe themselves in beauty,
They breathe a rich perfume,
But cannot fold around you
A mother's loving arms;—
Far, far away that mother's fond embrace.

'Life's early dawn just opening faint,
Your eye yet beaming Heaven's own smile,
So soon your tenderest guardians gone;—
Severe, poor child, your fate,—
All, all to you unknown.

'A noble duke has cross'd the mead,
And near you check'd his steed's career:
Wonder and pity touch his heart;
With knowledge high and manners pure
He rears you,—makes his castle home your own.

'How great, how infinite, your gain!
Of all the land you bloom the loveliest,
Yet, ah! the priceless blessing,
The bliss of parents' fondness,
You left on strands unknown.'

Undine touched her lute with the low undertones of feeling, and paused with a melancholy smile; the eyes of Bertalda's ducal foster-parents were filled with tears.

'Ah yes, it was so, — such *was* the morning on which I found you, poor amiable orphan,' cried the duke with deep emotion; 'the beautiful singer is certainly right; still

"That priceless blessing,
The bliss of parents' fondness,"

it was beyond our power to give you.'—

'But we must hear also, what happened to the poor parents,' said Undine, as she struck the chords, and sung:

'Through her chambers roams the mother,
Searching, searching everywhere;
Seeks, and knows not what, with yearning,
Childless house still finding there.

'Childless house!—O sound of anguish!
She alone the anguish knows,
There by day who led her dear one,
There who rock'd its night-repose.

'Beechen buds again are swelling,
Sunshine warms again the shore,
Ah, fond mother, cease your searching,
Comes the loved and lost no more.

'Then when airs of eve are fresh'ning,
Home the father wends his way,
While with smiles his woe he's veiling,
Gushing tears his heart betray.

'Well he knows, within his dwelling
Still as death he'll find the gloom,
Only hear the mother moaning,—
No sweet babe to *smile* him home.'

'O tell me, in the name of God tell me, Undine, where are my parents?' cried the weeping Bertalda. '*You* certainly know, you must have discovered them, *you wonderful* woman, for otherwise you would never

have thus torn my heart. Can they be already here? May I believe it possible?' Her eye glanced rapidly over the brilliant company, and rested upon a lady of distinction, who was sitting next to her foster-father.

Then, with an inclination of her head, Undine beckoned toward the door, while her eyes overflowed with the sweetest emotion. 'Where then are the poor parents waiting?' she asked, and the old fisherman, diffident and hesitating, advanced with his wife from the crowd of spectators. Swift as the rush of hope within them, they threw a look of inquiry, now at Undine, and now at the beautiful lady, who was said to be their daughter.

'It is she! it is she there before you!' exclaimed the restorer of their child, with the imperfect utterance of rapture, and both the aged parents embraced their recovered daughter, weeping aloud and praising God.

But, shocked and indignant, Bertalda tore herself from their arms. Such a discovery was too severe for her proud spirit to bear, especially at the moment when she had doubtless expected to see her former splendour increased, and when hope was picturing to her nothing less brilliant than a royal canopy and a crown. It seemed to her as if her rival had contrived all this, and with the special view to humble her before Huldbrand and the whole world. She reproached Undine, she abused the old people, and even such offensive words as 'deceiver, bribed and perjured impostors,' burst from her lips.

The aged wife of the fisherman then said to herself, *but in a very low* voice: 'Ah, my God! what a worth-

less vixen of a woman she has grown! and yet I feel in my heart, that she is my child.'

The old fisherman, however, had meanwhile folded his hands, and offered up a silent prayer, that she might *not* be his daughter.

Undine, faint and pale as death, turned from the parents to Bertalda, from Bertalda to the parents; she was suddenly cast down from all that heaven of happiness, of which she had been dreaming, and plunged into an agony of terror and disappointment, of which until now she had never formed even a dream.

'Have you then a soul? Can you really have a soul, Bertalda?' she cried again and again to her angry friend, as if with vehement effort she would rouse her from a sudden delirium or some distracting dream of night, and restore her to recollection.

But when Bertalda became every moment only more and more enraged, as the disappointed parents began to weep aloud, and the company, with much warmth of dispute, were espousing opposite sides, she discovered a prompt and admirable presence of mind: she begged for the liberty of speaking in this her husband's dining-hall, and so worthy of praise was her purpose, and so earnest were her expressions and tones, that all around her were in an instant hushed to silence. She then advanced to the upper end of the table, where, both humbled and haughty, Bertalda had seated *herself*, and, while every eye was fastened upon her, *spoke in the* following manner:

'*My friends*, I am grieved to see you appear so

dissatisfied and disturbed. This entertainment of mine, which you are interrupting with your heated discussion, I had hoped would prove a satisfaction to you and myself. Ah, my God! I knew nothing of these your heartless maxims, these your unnatural ways of thinking, and never so long as I live, I fear, shall I become reconciled to them. The disclosure I have made, it seems, is unwelcome to you; it has produced all this excitement and confusion; but I am not to blame for such a result. Believe me, little as you may imagine this to be the case, it is wholly owing to yourselves. One word more, therefore, is all I have to add, but this is one that must be spoken: I have uttered nothing but truth. Of the certainty of the fact I give you the strongest assurance; no other proof can I or will I produce; but this I will affirm in the presence of God. The individual who gave me this information, was the very person who decoyed the infant Bertalda into the water, and who, after thus taking her from her parents, placed her on the green grass of the meadow, where he knew the duke was to pass.'

'She is an enchantress,' cried Bertalda, 'a witch, that has intercourse with evil spirits. She has even now confessed it herself.'

'Never! I deny it,' replied Undine, while a whole heaven of innocence and truth beamed from her eyes. 'I am no witch; look upon me, see and acknowledge *the injustice of her* words.'

'*Then she utters* both falsehood and folly,' cried

Bertalda, 'and she is unable to prove that I am the child of these low people. My noble parents, I entreat you to take me from this company, and out of this city, beyond the breath of calumny and abuse. Nothing but detraction meets me here.'

But the aged duke, a man of honourable feeling, remained unmoved by her excited state, and his lady remarked: 'We must thoroughly examine the circumstances of this matter. God forbid, that we should move a step from this hall, before we do so.'

Encouraged by this kind word, the aged wife of the fisherman drew near, made a low obeisance to the dutchess, and said: 'Exalted and pious lady, you have opened my heart. Permit me to tell you, that if this evil-disposed maiden is my daughter, she has a mark, like a violet, between her shoulders, and another of the same kind on the instep of her left foot. If she will only consent to go out of the hall with me——'

'I will not consent to uncover myself before the peasant woman,' interrupted Bertalda, haughtily turning her back upon her.

'But before me you certainly will,' replied the dutchess with solemnity. 'You will follow me into that room, young woman, and the worthy old lady shall go with us.'

The three disappeared, and the rest continued where they were in the hush of almost unbreathing expectation. In a few minutes the females returned, Bertalda pale as death, and the dutchess said: 'Truth must be

acknowledged as truth; I therefore declare, that our lady hostess has spoken with perfect correctness. Bertalda is the fisherman's daughter; no further proof is required; and this is all, of which on the present occasion you need to be informed.'

The princely pair went out with their adopted daughter; the fisherman, in consequence of a sign from the duke, followed them with his wife. The other guests retired in silence, or but imperfectly suppressing their murmurs, while Undine sunk weeping into the arms of Huldbrand.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW THEY DEPARTED FROM THE CITY.

The lord of Ringstetten would certainly have been more gratified had the events of this day been different; but even such as they now were, he could by no means look upon them as unwelcome, since his wife had discovered so much discretion, kindness of spirit, and cordial affection.

'If I have given her a soul,' he could not help saying to himself, 'I have assuredly given her a better one than my own;' and now what chiefly occupied his mind, was to soothe and comfort his weeping wife, and even so early as the morrow to remove her from a place, which, after this cross accident, could not fail to be distasteful to her. Yet it is certain, that the opinion of the public concerning her was not changed. As something extraordinary had long before been expected of her, the mysterious discovery of Bertalda's parentage had occasioned little or no surprise; and every one who became acquainted with the disclosure *of Bertalda's* story, and with the violence of her beha*viour on* that occasion, was only disgusted and set *against* her. Of this state of things, however, the

knight and his lady were as yet ignorant; besides, whether the public condemned Bertalda or herself, the one view of the affair would have been as distressing to Undine as the other; and thus they came to the conclusion, that the wisest course they could take, was to leave behind them the walls of the old city with all the speed in their power.

With the earliest beams of morning, a brilliant carriage, for Undine, drove up to the door of the inn; the horses of Huldbrand and his attendants stood near, stamping the pavement, impatient to proceed. The knight was leading his beautiful wife from the door, when a fish-girl came up and met them in the way.

'We have no occasion for your fish,' said Huldbrand, accosting her, 'we are this moment setting out on a journey.'

Upon this the fish-girl began to weep bitterly, and then it was that the young couple first perceived it was Bertalda. They immediately returned with her to their apartment, when she informed them, that, owing to her unfeeling and violent conduct of the preceding day, the duke and dutchess had been so displeased with her, as entirely to withdraw from her their protection, though not before giving her a generous portion. The fisherman, too, had received a handsome gratuity, and had, the evening before, set out with his wife for his beloved peninsula.

'I would have gone with them,' she pursued, 'but the *old fisherman, who is* called my father;' — — —

'*He certainly is* your father, Bertalda,' said Undine,

interrupting her. 'Pray consider what I tell you: the stranger, whom you took for the master of the water-works, gave me all the particulars. He wished to dissuade me from taking you with me to Castle Ringstetten, and therefore, disclosed to me the whole mystery.'

'Well then,' continued Bertalda, 'my father,—if it must needs be so,—my father said: "I will not take you with me, until your mind and manners are changed. If you will venture to come to us alone through the ill-omened forest, that shall be a proof of your having some regard for us. But come not to me as a lady; come merely as a fish-girl."—I am determined therefore to do just what he commanded me; for since I am abandoned by all the world, I will live and die in solitude, a poor fish-girl with parents equally poor. The forest, indeed, appears very terrible to me. Horrible spectres make it their haunt, and I am so timorous. But how can I help it?—I have only come here at this early hour, to beg the noble lady of Ringstetten to pardon my unbecoming behaviour of yesterday. Dear madam, I have the fullest persuasion, that you meant to do me a kindness, but you were not aware, how severely you would wound and injure me; and this was the reason, that, in my agony and surprise, so many rash and frantic expressions burst from my lips.—Forgive me, ah forgive me! I am in truth so unhappy *already*. Only consider what I was but yesterday *morning*, what I was even at the beginning of your

yesterday's festival, and what I am at the present moment!'—

Her words now became inarticulate, lost in a passionate flow of tears, while Undine, bitterly weeping with her, fell upon her neck. So powerful was her emotion, that it was a long time before she could utter a word. At length she said:

'Dearest Bertalda, do not despair; you shall still go with us to Ringstetten; all shall remain just as we lately arranged it; only, in speaking to me, pray continue to use the familiar and affectionate terms, that we have been wont to use, and do not pain me with the sound of 'madam' and 'noble lady,' any more. Consider, we were changed for each other, when we were children; even then we were united by a like fate, and we will strengthen this union with such close affection as no human power shall dissolve. Only first of all you must go with us to Ringstetten. As to the manner in which we shall share our sisterly enjoyments, we will leave that to be talked over after we arrive.'

Bertalda looked up to Huldbrand with timid inquiry. He pitied her in her affliction, took her hand, and begged her, with the greatest tenderness, to intrust herself to him and his wife.

'We will send a message to your parents,' continued he, 'giving them the reason why you have not come;'—and he would have added more about his *worthy friends* of the peninsula, when, perceiving that *Bertalda shrunk* in distress at the mention of them, he

waved the subject. He took her under the arm, lifted her first into the carriage, then Undine, and was soon trotting blithely beside them; so persevering was he, too, in urging forward their driver, that in a short time they had left the limits of the city, and with these a crowd of painful recollections; and now the ladies experienced a satisfaction, more and more exquisite, as their carriage rolled on through the picturesque scenes, which their progress was continually presenting.

After a journey of some days, they arrived, on a fine evening, at Castle Ringstetten. The young knight being much engaged with the overseers and menials of his establishment, Undine and Bertalda were left alone. Eager for novelty, they took a walk upon the high rampart of the fortress, and were charmed with the delightful landscape, which fertile Suabia spread around them. While they were viewing the scene, a tall man drew near, who greeted them with respectful civility, and who seemed to Bertalda much to resemble the director of the city fountain. Still less was the resemblance to be mistaken, when Undine, indignant at his intrusion, waved him off with an air of menace; while he, shaking his head, retreated with rapid strides, as he had formerly done, then glided among the trees of a neighbouring grove and disappeared.

'*Do* not be terrified, Bertalda,' said Undine; 'the *odious* monster of the fountain shall do you no harm *this time*.'—And then she related to her the particu-

lars of her history, and who she was herself,—how Bertalda had been taken away from the people of the peninsula, and Undine substituted in her place. This relation at first, filled the young woman with amazement and alarm; she imagined her friend must be seized with a sudden alienation of mind. But, from the consistency of her story, she became more and more convinced that all was true, it so well agreed with her former adventures, and still more from that inward feeling, with which truth never fails to make itself known to us. She could not but view it as an extraordinary circumstance, that she was herself now living, as it were, in the midst of one of those wild fictions of romance, which she had formerly heard related for mere amusement. She gazed upon Undine with awe, but could not avoid feeling a shudder, which seemed to separate her from her friend; and she could not but be extremely astonished, when the knight, at their evening repast, showed himself so kind and affectionate toward a being, who appeared, after the discoveries just made, more to resemble a phantom of the spirit-world than one of the human race.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW THEY LIVED AT CASTLE RINGSTETTEN.

The writer of this history, because it touches his own heart, and because he wishes it may equally move the hearts of others, begs you, dear reader, to grant him a single indulgence. Excuse him, if he now passes over a considerable period of time, and gives you only a general account of its events. He is well aware, that, perfectly conforming to the rules of art and step by step, he might delineate the process, by which Huldbrand's warmth of attachment for Undine began to decline and to be transferred to Bertalda; how Bertalda gradually became more and more attached, and met the young man's glance with a glow of love; how they both seemed rather to fear the poor wife, as a being of another species, than to sympathize with her; how Undine wept, and her tears produced remorse in the knight's heart, yet without awakening his former tenderness, so that his treatment *of her* would discover occasional impulses of kindness, *but a cold* shuddering would soon drive him from her *side, and* he would hasten to the society of Bertalda,

as a more congenial being of his own race;—all this, the writer is aware, he could describe with the minute touches of truth, and perhaps this is the course that he ought to pursue. But his heart would feel the task to be too melancholy, for, having suffered calamities of this nature, he is impressed with terror even at the remembrance of their shadows.

You have probably experienced a similar feeling yourself, my dear reader, for such is the inevitable allotment of mortal man. Happy are you, if you have rather endured than inflicted this misery, since, in matters of this kind, more blessed is he that receives than he that gives. For in this case, when such remembrances come over the mind, only a soft pensiveness steals into the soul, and perhaps a tender tear trickles down your cheek, while you regret the fading of the flowers, in which you once took a delight so exquisite. But of this no more; we would not linger over the evil, and pierce our hearts with a thousand separate pangs, but just briefly hint the course of events, as I said before.

Poor Undine was extremely distressed, and the other two were far from being happy; Bertalda in particular, whenever she was in the slightest degree opposed in her wishes, attributed the cause to the jealousy and oppression of the injured wife. In consequence of this suspicious temper, she was daily in the habit of discovering a haughty and imperious demeanour, to which Undine *submitted* in sad and painful self-denial; and such

was the blind delusion of Huldbrand, that he usually supported the impropriety in the most decisive terms.

What disturbed the inmates of the castle still more, was the endless variety of wonderful apparitions, which assailed Huldbrand and Bertalda in the vaulted passages of the building, and of which nothing had ever been heard before within the memory of man. The tall white man, in whom Huldbrand but too well recognized Undine's uncle Kühleborn, and Bertalda the mysterious or spectral master of the water-works, often passed before them with threatening aspect and gestures; more especially, however, before Bertalda, so that she had already several times fainted and fallen through terror, and had in consequence frequently thought of quitting the castle. But partly owing to her excessive fondness for Huldbrand, as well as to a reliance on what she termed her innocence, since no declaration of mutual attachment had ever been distinctly made, and partly also, because she knew not whither to direct her steps, she lingered where she was.

The old fisherman, on receiving the message from the lord of Ringstetten, that Bertalda was a welcome guest in his family, returned answer in some lines almost too illegible to be decyphered, but still the best his advanced life and long disuse of writing permitted him to form.

"I have now become," he wrote, "a poor old widower, for my beloved and faithful wife is dead. *But* bereaved and disconsolate as I am, sitting soli-

tary in my cottage, I prefer Bertalda's remaining where she is, to her living with me. One thing is all I have to ask, which is this, that she do nothing to hurt my dear Undine, or to make her unhappy. Should she be thus guilty, she must expect, what she will certainly have, the visitation of a father's curse."

The last words of this letter, awful as they were, Bertalda flung to the winds; but the permission to remain from home, which her father had granted her, she remembered and clung to as a peculiar indulgence, just as we all are wont to do in like circumstances.

One day, a few moments after Huldbrand had ridden out, Undine called together the domestics of the family, and ordered them to bring a large stone, and carefully to cover with it a magnificent fountain, that was situated in the middle of the castle court. The servants ventured to hint as an objection, that it would oblige them to bring their water from the valley below, which was at an inconvenient distance. Undine smiled with an expression of melancholy.

'I am sorry, dear children,' replied she, 'to increase your labour; I should prefer to bring up the water vessels myself, but this fountain must indeed be closed. Believe me when I say, that it must be done, and that by doing it we only avoid a greater evil, — one that may well be called a calamity.'

The domestics were all delighted to gratify their gentle mistress; and making no further inquiry, they seized the enormous stone. While they were raising it in their hands, and were now on the point of ad-

justing it over the fountain, Bertalda came running to the place, and cried with an air of command, that they must stop; that the water she used, so improving to her complexion, she was wont to have brought from this fountain, and that she would by no means allow it to be closed.

This time, however, Undine, while she showed her usual gentleness and more than her usual resolution, remained firm to her purpose: she said it belonged to her, as mistress of the house, to direct the regulations of the establishment according to her best judgment, and that she was accountable in this to no one but her lord and husband.

'See, O pray, see!' exclaimed the dissatisfied and indignant Bertalda, 'how the beautiful water is curling and curving, winding and waving there, as if disturbed at being shut out from the bright sunshine, and from the cheerful view of the human countenance, for whose mirror it was created.'

In truth, the water of the fountain was agitated, and foaming, and hissing in a surprising manner; it seemed as if there were something within possessing life and will, that was struggling to free itself from confinement. But Undine only the more earnestly urged on the accomplishment of her commands. This earnestness was scarcely required. The servants of the castle were as happy in obeying their sweet-tempered lady, as in opposing the haughty spirit of Bertalda; and with whatever rudeness the latter might even scold and threaten, still the stone was in a few minutes lying firm over the

opening of the fountain. Undine leaned thoughtfully over it, and wrote with her beautiful fingers on the flat surface. She must, however, have had something very acrid and corrosive in her hand; for when she retired, and the domestics went up to examine the stone, they discovered various strange characters upon it, which none of them had seen there before.

When the knight returned home toward evening, Bertalda received him with tears and complaints of Undine's treatment of her. He threw a severe look at his poor wife, and she cast down her eyes in evident distress. Still she spoke with great firmness:

'My lord and husband, you never reprove even a bond-slave, before you hear his defence, how much less then your wedded wife!'

'Speak, what moved you to this singular conduct?' said the knight with a gloomy countenance.

'I could wish to tell you, when we are entirely alone,' said Undine with a sigh.

'You can tell me equally well in the presence of Bertalda,' he replied.

'Yes, if you command me,' said Undine, 'but do not command me. Pray, pray, do not!'

She looked so humble, affectionate, and obedient, that the heart of the knight was touched and softened, as if it felt the influence of a ray from better times. He kindly took her arm within his, and led her to his apartment, where she spoke as follows:

'*You already know* something, my beloved lord, of *Kühleborn, my* evil-disposed uncle, and have often felt

displeasure at meeting him in the passages of this castle. Several times has he terrified Bertalda even to swooning. He does this, because he possesses no soul, being a mere elemental mirror of the outward world, while of the world within he can give no reflection. Then, too, he sometimes observes, that you are displeased with me, that in my childish weakness I weep at this, and that Bertalda, it may be, is laughing at the same moment. Hence it is, that he conceives every sort of wrong and unkindness to exist, and in various ways mixes with our circle unbidden. What do I gain by reproving him? by showing displeasure, and sending him away? He does not believe a word I say. His poor imperfect nature affords him no conception that the vicissitudes and satisfactions of love have so mysterious a resemblance, and are so intimately connected, that no power on earth is able to separate them. Even in the midst of tears, a smile is dawning on the cheek, and smiles call forth tears from their secret recesses.'

She looked up at Huldbrand, smiling and weeping, and he again felt within his heart all the magic of his former affection. She perceived it, and pressed him more tenderly to her, while amid tears of joy she went on thus:

'When the disturber of our peace would not be dismissed with words, I was obliged to shut the door upon him; and the only entrance by which he has access *to us, is* that fountain. His connexion with the other *water-spirits*, here in this region, is cut off by the vol-

lies that border upon us, and his kingdom first commences farther off on the Danube, in whose tributary streams some of his good friends have their abode. For this reason I caused the stone to be placed over the opening of the fountain, and inscribed characters upon it, which baffle all the efforts of my suspicious and passionate uncle, so that he now has no power of intruding either upon you, or me, or Bertalda. Human beings, it is true, notwithstanding the characters I have inscribed there, are able to raise the stone without any extraordinary trouble whatever; there is nothing to prevent them. If therefore this be your resolve, remove it according to Bertalda's desire, but she assuredly knows not what she asks. The rude Kühleborn looks with peculiar ill-will upon her; and should much come to pass that he has imperfectly predicted to me, and which is quite likely to happen, without your meaning any evil, — I fear, my husband, that you yourself would be exposed to peril.'

Huldbrand felt the generosity of his amiable wife in the depth of his heart, since she had been so active in confining her formidable defender, and even at the very moment she was suffering in consequence of the reproaches of Bertalda. Influenced by this feeling, he pressed her in his arms with the tenderest affection, and said with emotion:

'The stone shall remain unmoved, all remains and ever shall remain, just as you choose to have it, my dear, very dear Undine!'

At these long-withheld expressions of tenderness,

she returned his caresses with lowly delight, and ending what she had to say, observed: 'My dearest husband, since you are so very kind and indulgent to-day, may I venture to ask a favour of you? Pray observe, it is with you as with summer. Even amid its highest splendour, summer puts on the flaming and thundering crown of glorious tempests, in which it strongly resembles a king and god on earth. You too are sometimes terrible in your rebukes; your eyes flash lightning, while thunder resounds in your voice; and although this may be quite becoming to you, I in my folly cannot but sometimes weep at it. But never, I entreat you, discover such violence toward me on a river, or even when we are near a piece of water. For if you should, my relations would acquire a right to exercise authority over me. They would tear me from you in their fury with inexorable force, because they would conceive that one of their race was injured, and I should be compelled, as long as I lived, to dwell below in the crystal palaces, and never dare ascend to you again; or should *they send* me up to you, O God! that would be infinitely more deplorable still. No, no, my beloved husband, let it not come to that, if your poor Undine is dear to you.'

He solemnly promised to do as she desired, and, infinitely happy and full of affection, the married pair returned from the apartment. At this very moment, *Bertalda* came with some work-people, whom she had *meanwhile* ordered to attend her, and said with a fretful air, which she had assumed of late:—

'Well, now the secret consultation is at an end, it is to be hoped the stone may be permitted to come down. Go out, workmen, and execute your business.'

The knight, however, highly resenting her impertinence, said in brief and very decisive terms: 'The stone remains where it is;' he reproved Bertalda also for the vehement and undisciplined spirit that she had discovered toward his wife. Whereupon the workmen, smiling with secret satisfaction, withdrew; while Bertalda, pale with rage, hurried to her room.

When the hour of supper came, no Bertalda appeared: they waited for her in vain. They sent for her; but the domestic found her apartments empty, and brought back with him only a sealed billet, addressed to the knight. He opened it in alarm, and read:

"I feel with shame, that I am only the daughter of a poor fisherman. That I for one moment forgot this, I will make expiation in the miserable hut of my parents. Farewell, with your beautiful wife!"

Undine was troubled at heart. With passionate emphasis she entreated Huldbrand to hasten after their friend, who had flown, and bring her back with him. Alas! she had no occasion to urge him. His passion for Bertalda again burst forth with vehemence. He hurried round the castle, inquiring whether any one had seen which way the fair fugitive had gone. He could gain no information, and was already in the court upon his horse, determining to take at a venture the *road by which* he had conducted Bertalda to the castle; when there appeared a shield-boy, who assured

him, that he had met the lady on the path to the Black Valley. Swift as the impulse of passion, the knight sprung through the gate in the direction pointed out, without hearing Undine's voice of agony, as she cried after him from the window:

'To the Black Valley? O not there! Huldbrand, not there! or if you will go, for God's sake take me with you!'

But when she perceived that all her calling was of no avail, she ordered her white palfrey to be instantly saddled, and followed the knight without permitting a single servant to accompany her.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW BERTALDA RETURNED WITH THE KNIGHT.

The Black Valley lies secluded far among the mountains. What its present name may be, I am unable to say. At the time of which I am speaking, the country-people gave it this appellation from the deep obscurity produced by the shadows of lofty trees, more especially by a crowded growth of firs, that covered this region of moor-land. Even the brook, which ascended into it from among the crags, assumed the same dark hue, and exhibited nothing of that cheerful aspect, which streams are wont to wear, that have the blue sky immediately over them.

It was now the dusk of evening, and the view between the heights had become extremely wild and gloomy. The knight, in great anxiety, skirted the border of the brook; he was at one time fearful, that by delay he should allow the fugitive to advance too far before him; and then, again, in his too eager rapidity, he was afraid he might somewhere overlook *and pass by her*, should she be desirous of concealing *herself* from his search. He had in the meantime

penetrated pretty far into the valley, and felt assured of soon overtaking the maiden, provided he were pursuing the right track. The fear, indeed, that he might not as yet have gained it, made his heart beat with more and more of anxiety. In the stormy night, which was now impending, and which always hovered more fearfully over this valley, where would the delicate Bertalda shelter herself, should he fail to find her? At last, while these thoughts were darting across his mind, he saw something white glimmer through the branches on the ascent of the mountain. He felt quite certain, that the object he discerned was Bertalda's robe, and he directed his course toward it. But his horse refused to go forward; he reared with a fury so uncontrollable, and his master was so unwilling to lose a moment, that (especially as he saw the thickets were altogether impassable on horseback) he dismounted, and, having fastened his snorting steed to an elm, worked his way with caution through the matted underwood. The branches, moistened by the cold drops of the evening dew, smote his forehead and cheeks; thunder muttered remotely on the further side of the mountains; and every thing put on so strange and mystic an appearance, that he began to feel a dread of the white figure, which now lay at a short distance from him upon the ground. Still he could see with perfect clearness, that it was a female, *either asleep* or in a swoon, and dressed in long *white garments*, such as Bertalda had worn the past *day.* Approaching quite near to her, he made a

rustling with the branches and a ringing with his word,—but she did not move.

'Bertalda!' he cried; at first low, then louder and louder; yet she heard him not. At last, when he uttered the dear name with an energy yet more powerful, a hollow echo, from the mountain-summits around the valley, returned the deadened sound, "Bertalda!" Still the sleeper continued insensible. He stooped low, with a view to examine her countenance, but the duskiness of the valley and the obscurity of twilight would not allow him to distinguish her features. While with agonizing uncertainty he was bending near to her, a flash of lightning suddenly shot across the valley. By this stream of light, he saw a frightfully distorted visage close to his own, and a hoarse voice reached his ear:

'You enamoured shepherd, give me a kiss:' Huldbrand sprang upon his feet with a cry of horror, and the hideous figure rose with him.

'Home!' it cried with a deep murmur; 'the fiends are abroad. Home! or I have you!' And it stretched toward him its long white arms.

'Malicious Kühleborn,' exclaimed the knight with restored energy, 'if Kühleborn you are, what business have you here!—what's your will, you goblin!—There, take your kiss!'—And in fury he flashed his sword at the form. But the form vanished like vapour; and a rush of water giving the knight a *thorough drenching*, left him in no doubt with what *foe he had* been engaged.

'He wishes to frighten me back from my pursuit of Bertalda,' said he to himself; 'he imagines, that I shall be terrified at his senseless enchantments, and resign the poor distressed girl to his power, so that he can wreak his vengeance upon her at will. But, impotent spirit of the flood! he shall find himself mistaken. What the heart of man can do, when it exerts the full force of its will, the strong energy of its noblest powers, of this the feeble enchanter has no comprehension.'

He felt the truth of his words, and that, in thus giving utterance to his thoughts, he had inspired his heart with fresh courage. Fortune too appeared to be in league with him; for, before reaching his fastened steed, he distinctly heard the voice of Bertalda, where she was now weeping and now moaning not far before him, amid the roar of the thunder and the tempest, which every moment increased. He flew swiftly toward the sound, and found the trembling maiden, just as she was attempting to climb the steep, hoping to escape from the dreadful darkness of this valley. He stepped before her, while he spoke in tones of the most soothing tenderness; and bold and proud as her resolution had so lately been, she now felt nothing but the liveliest gratitude, that the man, whom she so passionately loved, would rescue her from this frightful solitude, and extending to her his arms of *welcome*, would still cast a brightness over her *existence* in their re-union at the castle. She followed *almost* unresisting, but so spent with fatigue, that the

knight was glad to accompany and support her to his horse, which he now hastily unfastened from the elm: his intention was to lift the fair wanderer upon him, and then to lead him carefully by the reins through the uncertain shades of this lowland tract.

But, owing to the mad appearance of Kühleborn, the horse had become wholly unmanageable. Rearing and wildly snorting as he was, the knight must have used uncommon effort to mount the beast himself; to place the trembling Bertalda upon him, was impossible. They were compelled, therefore, to return home on foot. While with one hand the knight drew the steed after him by the bridle, he supported the tottering Bertalda with the other. She exerted all the strength in her power, in order to escape from this vale of terrors as speedily as possible; but weariness weighed her down like lead, and a universal trembling seized her limbs, partly in consequence of what she had suffered from the extreme harrassment with which Kühleborn had pursued her, and in part from her continual fear, arising from the roar of the tempest and thunder amid the mountain forest.

At last she slid from the arm of her conductor, and, sinking upon the moss, she said: 'Only let me lie here, my noble lord. I suffer the punishment due to my folly, and I must perish here through faintness and dismay.'

'Never, Bertalda, will I leave you,' cried Huldbrand, *vainly trying* to restrain the furious animal he was *leading; for* the horse was all in a foam, and began

to chafe more ungovernably than before, till the knight was glad merely to keep him at such a distance from the exhausted maiden, as would secure her from still greater fear and alarm. But hardly had he withdrawn five steps with the frantic steed, when she began to call after him in the most sorrowful accents, fearful that he would actually leave her in this horrible wilderness. He was at a loss what course to take. He would gladly have given the enraged beast his liberty; he would have let him rush away amid the night, and exhaust his fury, had he not shuddered at the thought, that in this narrow defile his iron-shod hoofs might come trampling and thundering over the very spot where Bertalda lay.

During this extreme peril and embarrassment, a feeling of delight shot through him, when he heard the rumbling wheels of a wagon, as it came slowly descending the stony way behind them. He called out for help: answer was returned in the deep voice of a man, bidding them have patience, but promising assistance; and two horses of grayish white soon after shone through the bushes, and near them their driver in the white frock of a carter; and next appeared a great sheet of white linen, with which the goods he seemed to be conveying, were covered. The whitish grays, in obedience to a shout from their master, stood still. He came up to the knight, and *aided him* in checking the fury of the foaming charger.

'*I know* well enough,' said he, 'what is the matter *with the* brute. The first time I travelled this way,

my horses were just as wilful and headstrong as yours. The reason is, there is a water-spirit haunts this valley, and a wicked wight they say he is, who takes delight in mischief and witcheries of this sort. But I have learned a charm; and if you will let me whisper it in your horse's ear, he will stand just as quiet as my silver grays there.'

'Try your luck, then, and help us as quick as possible!' said the impatient knight.

Upon this the wagoner drew down the head of the rearing courser close to his own, and spoke some half-dozen words in his ear. The animal instantly stood as still and subdued as usual, excepting his quick panting and smoking sweat, produced by his recent violence.

Huldbrand had little time to inquire, by what means this had been effected. He agreed with the man, that he should take Bertalda in his wagon, where, as he said, a quantity of soft cotton was stowed, and he might in this way convey her to Castle Ringstetten; the knight could accompany them on horseback. But the horse appeared to be too much exhausted to carry his master so far. Seeing this, the man advised him to mount the wagon with Bertalda. The horse could be attached to it behind.

'It is down hill,' said he, 'and the load for my grays will therefore be light.'

The knight accepted his offer, and entered the wagon with Bertalda; the horse followed patiently

after, while the wagoner, sturdy and attentive, walked beside them.

Amid the silence and deeper obscurity of the night, the tempest became more and more remote and hushed; in the comfortable feeling of their security and their commodious passage, a confidential conversation arose between Huldbrand and Bertalda. He reproved her in the most gentle and affectionate terms for her resentful flight; she excused herself with humility and emotion, and from every tone of her voice it was clear just as a lamp guides a lover amid the secrecy of night to his waiting mistress, that she still cherished her former affection for him. The knight felt the force of what she said far too powerfully to regard the import of her *words*, and his replies related merely to the impression he received,—to the feeling and not the confession of love.

In the midst of this interchange of murmured feelings, the wagoner suddenly shouted with a startling voice: 'Up, my grays, up with your feet! Hey, my hearts, now together, show your spirit! Do it handsomely! remember who you are!'

The knight bent over the side of the wagon, and saw that the horses had stepped into the midst of a foaming stream, and were, indeed, almost swimming, while the wheels of the wagon were rushing round and flashing like mill-wheels, and the teamster had got *on before* to avoid the swell of the flood.

'*What* sort of a road is this? It leads into the *middle* of the stream!' cried Huldbrand to his guide.

'Not at all, sir,' returned he with a laugh, 'it is just the contrary. The stream is running in the middle of our road. Only look about you, and see how all is overflowed.'

The whole valley, in fact, was covered and in commotion, as the waves, suddenly raised and visibly rising, swept over it.

'It is Kühleborn, that devil of a water-spirit, who wishes to drown us!' exclaimed the knight. 'Have you no charm of protection against him, companion?'

'Charm! to be sure I have one,' answered the wagoner, 'but I cannot and must not make use of it, before you know who I am.'

'Is this a time for riddles?' cried the knight. 'The flood is every moment rising higher, and what does it concern *me* to know who *you* are?'

'But mayhap it does concern you though,' said the guide, 'for *I* am Kühleborn.'

Thus speaking, he thrust his head into the wagon, and laughed with a distorted visage; but the wagon remained a wagon no longer, the grayish white horses were horses no longer; all was transformed to foam,—all sunk into the waves that rushed and hissed around them,—while the wagoner himself, rising in the form of a gigantic surge, dragged the vainly struggling courser under the waters, then rose again huge as a liquid tower, swept over the heads of the floating pair, and was on the point of burying them irrecoverably *beneath it;* when at that instant, the soft voice of *Undine* was heard through the uproar, the moon

emerged from the clouds, and by its light Undine became visible on a rising ground of the valley. She rebuked, she threatened the flood below her; the menacing and tower-like billow vanished muttering and murmuring; the waters gently flowed away under the beams of the moon; while Undine, like a hovering white dove, dipped down from the knoll, seized the knight and Bertalda, and supported them to a green spot of turf on the hillock, where, by her earnest efforts, she soon restored them, and dispelled their terrors. She then assisted Bertalda to mount the white palfrey, on which she had herself been borne to the valley, and thus all three returned homeward to Castle Ringstetten.

CHAPTER XV.

PASSAGE DOWN THE DANUBE TO VIENNA.

After this last adventure, they lived at the castle undisturbed and in peaceful enjoyment. The knight was more and more impressed with the heavenly goodness of his wife, which she had so beautifully discovered by her instant pursuit, and by the rescue she had effected in the Black Valley, where the power of Kühleborn again commenced. Undine herself felt that peace and security, which the mind never fails to experience, so long as it has the consciousness of pursuing the path of rectitude; and she had this additional comfort, that, in the newly awakened love and regard of her husband, Hope and Joy were rising upon her with their myriad beams of promise.

Bertalda, on the other hand, showed herself grateful, humble, and timid, without taking to herself any merit for so doing. Whenever Huldbrand or Undine began to explain to her their reason for covering the fountain, or their adventures in the Black Valley, she would earnestly entreat them to spare her the recital, since the

fountain had occasioned her too much shame, and the Black Valley too much terror, to be made topics of conversation. With respect to these, therefore, she learnt nothing farther from either of them; and why was it necessary that she should be informed? Peace and Joy had evidently taken up their abode at Castle Ringstetten. They enjoyed their present blessings in perfect security; and in relation to the future, they now imagined it impossible, that life could produce any thing but pleasant flowers and fruits.

In this grateful union of friendship and affection, winter came and passed away; and spring, with its foliage of tender green and its heaven of softest blue, succeeded to gladden the hearts of the three inmates of the castle. The season was in harmony with their minds, and their minds imparted their own hues to the season. What wonder, then, that its storks and swallows inspired them also with a disposition to travel! On a bright morning, while they were taking a walk down to one of the sources of the Danube, Huldbrand spoke of the magnificence of this noble stream, how it continued swelling as it flowed through countries enriched by its waters, with what splendour Vienna rose and sparkled on its banks, and how it grew lovelier and more imposing almost the whole of its progress.

'It must be a glorious privilege, once in our life, to trace its course down to Vienna!' Bertalda exclaimed, *with warmth*; but, immediately resuming the humble and *modest* demeanour she had recently shown, she paused *and blushed* in silence.

This incident, slight as it may appear, was extremely touching to Undine; and with the liveliest wish to gratify her friend, she said: 'Who, then, shall prevent our taking this little voyage?'

Bertalda leapt up with delight, and the two females the same moment began the work of imagination, painting this enchanting trip on the Danube in the most brilliant colours. Huldbrand, too, agreed to the project with pleasure; only he once whispered with something of alarm in Undine's ear:

'But, at that distance, Kühleborn becomes possessed of his power again?'

'Let him come, let him come,' she answered with a laugh; 'I shall be there, and he dares do none of his mischief in my presence.'

Thus was the last impediment removed; they prepared for the expedition, and soon set out upon it with lively spirits and the brightest hopes.

But be not surprised, O man, if events continually happen very different from what you expect. That malicious power, which lies in ambush for our destruction, delights to lull its chosen victim asleep with sweet songs and golden delusions; while, on the other hand, the messenger of Heaven, sent to rescue us from peril, often thunders at our door with the violence of alarm and terror.

During the first days of their passage down the Danube, they were unusually gratified. The farther *they advanced* upon the waters of this proud river, the *views became* more and more picturesque and attrac-

tive. But amid scenes otherwise most delicious, and from which they had promised themselves the purest delight, the stubborn Kühleborn, dropping all disguise, began to show his power of annoying them. He had few other means of doing this, indeed, than by mere tricks and illusions, for Undine often rebuked the swelling waves or the contrary winds, and then the insolence of the enemy was instantly humbled and subdued; but his attacks were renewed, and Undine's admonition again became necessary; so that the pleasure of this little water-party was completely destroyed. The oarsmen, too, were continually whispering to one another in dismay, and eyeing their three superiors with distrust; while even the servants began more and more to form dismal surmises, and to watch their master and mistress with looks of suspicion.

Huldbrand often said to himself, in the silence of his soul: "This comes to pass, when like marries not like, — when a man forms an unnatural union with a female of the sea." Excusing himself, as we are most of us so fond of doing, he frequently pursued a train of thought like this: "I did not in fact know that she *was* a maid of the sea. It is my misfortune, that my steps are haunted and disturbed by the wild humours of her kindred, but it is not my crime."

Making reflections like these, he felt himself in some measure strengthened; but, on the other hand, he only *the more* entertained a feeling of ill-humour against *Undine*, almost amounting to malevolence. He cast *upon her* glances of fretfulness and ill-nature, and the

unhappy wife but too well understood their meaning. One day, grieved by this unkindness, as well as exhausted by her unremitted exertions to frustrate the artifices of Kühleborn, while rocked and soothed by the gentle motion of the bark, she toward evening fell into a deep slumber. But hardly had she closed her eyes, when every person in the boat, in whatever direction he might look on the water, saw the head of a man, beyond imagination frightful: each head rose out of the waves, not like that of a person swimming, but quite perpendicular, as if firmly fastened to the watery mirror, and still moving on with the progress of the bark. Every one wished to show to his companion what terrified himself, and each perceived the same expression of horror on the face of the other, only his hand and eye were directed to a different quarter, as if to a point where the monster, half laughing and half threatening, rose opposite to himself.

When, however, they wished to make one another understand the sight, and all cried out, "Look there!" "No, there!" the frightful heads all became visible to each, and the whole river around the boat swarmed with faces of the most horrible expression. All raised a scream of terror at the sight, and Undine started from sleep. The moment she opened her eyes upon the mad group, the deformed visages disappeared. But Huldbrand was made furious by the frequent recurrence of these hideous visions. He would have burst *out in wild* imprecations, had not Undine, with the

most submissive air, and in the gentlest tone of suppli cation, thus entreated him:

'For God's sake, my husband, do not express dis pleasure against me here, — we are on the water.'

The knight was silent and sat down, absorbed in a profound reverie. Undine whispered in his ear 'Would it not be better, my love, to give up this fool ish voyage, and return to Castle Ringstetten in peace?

But Huldbrand murmured in a voice expressive o the embittered state of his mind: 'So I must becom a prisoner in my own castle? and not be allowed to breathe a moment but while the fountain is covered! Would to Heaven that our frantic union ——'

At these fatal words, Undine pressed her fair hand on his lips with the most touching tenderness. He said no more, but, assuming an air of composure, pondered on all that Undine had lately warned him to avoid.

Bertalda, meanwhile, had given herself up to a crowd of wild and wandering thoughts. Of Undine's origin she knew a good deal, but not the whole, and the terrible Kühleborn had, more especially, remained to her an awful and yet in every view an impenetra- ble mystery; never, indeed, had she once heard his name. Musing upon this series of wonders, she unclasped, without being fully conscious of what she was doing, a golden necklace, which Huldbrand, on *one of* the preceding days of their passage, had *bought* for her of a travelling trader; and she was

now letting it swing in sport just over the surface of the stream, while in her dreamy mood, she enjoyed the bright reflection it threw on the water, so clear beneath the glow of evening. That instant, a huge hand flashed suddenly up from the Danube, seized the necklace in its grasp, and vanished with it beneath the flood. Bertalda shrieked aloud, and a laugh of mockery and contempt came pealing up from the depth of the river.*

The knight could now restrain his wrath no longer. He started up, gazed fiercely upon the deep, poured forth a volley of reproaches, heaped curses upon all who interfered with his connection or troubled his life, and dared them all, water-spirits or mermaids, to come within the sweep of his sword.

Bertalda, meantime, wept for the loss of the ornament so very dear to her heart, and her tears were to Huldbrand as oil poured upon the flame of his fury; while Undine held her hand over the side of the boat, dipping it in the waves, softly murmuring to herself, and only at times interrupting her strange

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* This fine passage of Fouqué bears a strong resemblance to a finer one in Southey's Thalaba, Book v.

"And he drew off Abdaldar's Ring,
And cast it in the gulf.
A skinny hand came up,
And caught it as it fell,
And peals of devilish laughter shook the Cave."

The reader if he takes any interest in these coincidences of genius, may compare with these passages "the account of king Arthur's death, in Percy's Ballads, where a hand seizes Arthur's sword."

mysterious whisper, when she addressed her husband in a voice of entreaty:

'Do not reprove me here, Huldbrand; throw whatever blame upon others you will, but me, show me no unkindness here. Surely you know the reason!' And, in truth, though his tongue was trembling with excess of passion, he with strong effort kept himself from articulating a single word against her.

She then brought up in her wet hand, which she had been holding under the waves, a coral necklace of such exquisite beauty, such sparkling brilliancy, as dazzled the eyes of all who beheld it. 'Take this,' said she, holding it out with affectionate sweetness to Bertalda; 'I have ordered it to be brought, to make some amends for your loss, and do not be troubled any more, poor child.'

But the knight rushed between them, and, snatching the beautiful ornament out of Undine's hand, hurled it back into the flood, and in a flame of rage exclaimed: 'So then, you have a connexion with them forever? In the name of all witches and enchanters, go and remain among them with your presents, you sorceress, and leave us human beings in peace!'

But poor Undine, with a look of mute amazement and eyes streaming with tears, gazed on him, her hand still stretched out, just as it was when she had so kindly offered her brilliant gift to Bertalda. *She then* began to weep with more and more of *impassioned* anguish, like a tender child, all innocence

and bitterly grieved. At last she said, in a tone of voice the most faint and affecting:

'Alas, dear friend, all is over,—farewell! They shall do you no harm; only remain true, that I may keep them from you. But I, alas, must go away, I must go away, even in this early dawn of youth and bliss. O woe, woe, what have you done! O woe, woe!'

And she vanished over the side of the boat. Whether she plunged into the stream, or whether, like water melting into water, she flowed away with it, they knew not, her disappearance so much resembled both united, and neither by itself. But she was gone gliding on with the Danube, instantly and completely; only little waves were yet whispering and sobbing around the boat, and they seemed almost distinctly to say: 'O woe, woe! Ah, remain true! O woe!'

But Huldbrand, in a passion of burning tears threw himself upon the deck of the bark, and a deep swoon soon wrapped the wretched man in a blessed forgetfulness of misery.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHAT FURTHER HAPPENED TO HULDBRAND.

THE brief period of our mourning,—ought we to view it as a misfortune, or as a blessing? I mean that deep mourning of the heart, which gushes up from the very well-springs of our being; that mourning, which becomes so perfectly one with the lost object of our affection, that this even ceases to be a lost thing to the sorrowing heart; and which desires to make the whole life a holy office dedicated to the image of the departed, until we too pass that boundary which separates it from our view.

Some men there are, indeed, who have this profound tenderness of spirit, and who thus consecrate their affections to the memory of the departed; but still their mourning softens into an emotion of gentle melancholy, having none of the intenseness of the first agony of separation. Other and foreign images *intervene*, and impress themselves upon the mind; we *learn* at last the transitory nature of every thing *earthly*, even from that of our affliction; and I cannot

therefore but view it as a misfortune, that the period of our mourning is so brief.

The lord of Ringstetten learnt the truth of this by experience; but whether he derived any advantage from the knowledge, we shall discover in the sequel of this history. At first, he could do nothing but weep,—weep as bitterly as the poor amiable Undine had wept, when he snatched out of her hand that brilliant ornament, with which she so beautifully wished to make amends for Bertalda's loss. And then he stretched his hand out as she had done, and wept again like her with renewed violence. He cherished a secret hope, that even the springs of life would at last become exhausted by weeping; and when we have been severely afflicted, has not a similar thought passed through the minds of many of us with a painful pleasure? Bertalda wept with him, and they lived together a long while at the castle of Ringstetten in undisturbed quiet, honouring the memory of Undine, and having almost wholly forgotten their former attachment.

To encourage Huldbrand in this conduct, the good Undine, about this time, often visited his dreams; she soothed him with soft and affectionate caresses, and then went away again, weeping in silence, so that when he awoke, he sometimes knew not how his cheeks came to be so wet,—whether it was caused by *her* tears, or only by his own.

But as time advanced, these visions became less frequent, and the severity of the knight's sorrow was

softened; still he might never while he lived, it may be, have entertained any other wish than thus to think of Undine in silence, and to speak of her in conversation, had not the old fisherman arrived unexpectedly at the castle, and earnestly insisted on Bertalda's returning with him, as his child. He had received information of Undine's disappearance, and he was not willing to allow Bertalda to continue longer at the castle with the unmarried lord. 'For,' said he, 'whether my daughter loves me or not, is at present what I care not to know; but her good name is at stake, and where that commands or forbids, not a word more need be said.'

This resolution of the old fisherman, and the fearful solitude, that, on Bertalda's departure, threatened to oppress the knight in every hall and passage of the deserted castle, brought a circumstance into distinct consciousness, which, owing to his sorrow for Undine, had of late been slumbering and completely forgotten, — I mean his attachment to the fair Bertalda; and this he made known to her father.

The fisherman had many objections to make to the proposed marriage. The old man had loved Undine with exceeding tenderness, and it was a doubtful conclusion to his mind, that the mere disappearance of his beloved child could be properly viewed as her death. But were it even granted, that her corse were lying *stiff* and cold at the bottom of the Danube, or swept *away by* the current to the ocean, still Bertalda would *not be* guiltless in her death, and it would be wrong

for her to step into the place of the poor banished wife. The fisherman, however, had felt a strong regard also for the knight: this, and the entreaties of his daughter, who had become much more gentle and respectful, as well as her tears for Undine, all exerted their influence; and he seems to have been forced at last to give up his reluctance, for he remained at the castle without objection, and a courier was sent off express to father Heilmann, who in former and happier days had united Undine and Huldbrand, requesting him to come and perform the ceremony at the knight's second marriage.

But the holy man had hardly read through the letter from the lord of Ringstetten, ere he set out upon the journey, and made much greater despatch on his way to the castle, than the messenger from there had made in reaching him. Whenever his breath failed him in his rapid progress, or his old limbs ached with fatigue, he would say to himself:

'Perhaps I may still be in season to prevent the commission of a crime; then sink not, weak and withered body, before I arrive at the end of my journey!' And with renewed vigour he pressed forward, hurrying on without rest or repose, until, late one evening, he entered the embowered court-yard of the castle of Ringstetten.

The betrothed pair were sitting arm in arm under the trees, and the aged fisherman in a thoughtful mood sat near them. The moment they saw father Heilmann, they rose with a spring of joy, and pressed

round him with expressions of cordial welcome. But he, in the fewest words possible, urged the bridegroom * to accompany him into the castle; and when Huldbrand stood mute with surprise, and delayed complying with his earnest request, the pious priest said to him:

'Why do I then defer speaking, my lord of Ringstetten, until I can address you in private? There is no occasion for the delay of a moment. What I have to say, as much concerns Bertalda and the fisherman as yourself; and what we must inevitably hear, it is best to hear as soon as possible. Are you then so very *certain*, knight Huldbrand, that your first wife is actually dead? It hardly appears so to me. I will say nothing, indeed, of the mysterious situation in which she may be now existing; in truth, I know nothing of it with certainty. But that she was a most devoted and faithful wife, so much is beyond all dispute. And for fourteen nights past, she has appeared to me in a dream, standing at my bed-side, wringing her tender hands in anguish, and imploring me with deep sighs: 'Ah, prevent him, dear father! I am still living! Ah! save his life! Ah! save his soul!'

'What this vision of the night could mean, I was at first unable to divine; then came your messenger, and I have now hastened hither, not to unite, but, as I hope, to separate, what ought not to be joined together. Leave her, Huldbrand! Leave him, Bertalda!

* *The betrothed*, are called bride and bridegroom in Germany.

He still belongs to another; and do you not see on his pale cheek the traces of that grief, which the disappearance of his wife has produced there? That is not the look of a bridegroom, and the spirit breathes the presage on my soul: "If you do not leave him, you will never, never be happy."'

The three felt in their inmost hearts, that father Heilmann spoke the truth; but still they affected not to believe him, or they strove rather to resist their conviction. Even the old fisherman had become so infatuated, that he conceived the marriage to be now indispensable, as they had so often, during the time he had been with them, mutually agreed to the arrangement. They all, therefore, with a determined and gloomy eagerness, struggled against the representations and warnings of the spiritual man, until, shaking his head and oppressed with sorrow, he finally quitted the castle, not choosing to accept their offered shelter even for a single night, or indeed so much as to taste a morsel of the refreshment they brought him. Huldbrand persuaded himself, however, that the priest was a mere visionary or fanatic, and sent at day-break to a monk of the nearest monastery, who, without scruple, promised to perform the ceremony in a few days.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE KNIGHT'S DREAM.

It was at the earliest moment of dawn, when night begins faintly to brighten into moaning twilight, that Huldbrand was lying on his couch, half waking and half sleeping. Whenever he attempted to compose himself to sleep, he was seized with an undefined terror, that made him shrink back from the enjoyment, as if his slumber were crowded with spectres. But whenever he made an effort to rouse himself, the wings of a swan seemed to be waving around him, and soothing him with the music of their motion, and thus in a soft delusion of the senses he sunk back into his state of imperfect repose.

At last, however, he must have fallen perfectly asleep; for, while the melody of the swan-wings was murmuring around him, he seemed to be lifted by their regular strokes, and to be wafted far away over land and sea, and still their music swelled on his ear most sweetly. "*The* music of the swan! the song of the swan!" he *could not* but repeat to himself every moment; "is it *not a* sure foreboding of death?" Probably, howeve

it had yet another meaning. All at once he seemed to be hovering over the Mediterranean Sea. A swan sung melodiously in his ear, that this *was* the Mediterranean Sea. And while he was looking down upon the waves, they became transparent as crystal, so that he could see through them to the very bottom.

At this a thrill of delight shot through him, for he could see Undine where she was sitting beneath the clear domes of crystal. It is true, she was weeping very bitterly, and such was the excess of her grief, that she bore only a faint resemblance to the bright and joyous being she was, during those happy days they had lived together at the castle of Ringstetten, both on their arrival and afterward, a short time before they set out upon their fatal passage down the Danube. The knight could not avoid dwelling upon all this with deep emotion, but it does not appear that Undine was aware of his presence.

Kühleborn had meanwhile approached her, and was about to reprove her for weeping, when she assumed the boldness of superiority, and looked upon him with an air so dignified and commanding, that he was well nigh terrified and confounded by it.

'Although I too now dwell here beneath the waters,' said she, 'yet I have brought my soul with me. And therefore I may well be allowed to weep, little as you may conceive the meaning of such tears. They are *even* a blessed privilege, as every thing is *such a privilege*, to one inspired with the true soul.'

He shook his head with disbelief of what she

said, and after the recollection of a moment, replied: 'And yet, niece, you are subject to our laws of the element, as a being of the same nature with ourselves; and, should *He* prove unfaithful to you and marry again, you are obliged to take away his life.'

'He remains a widower to this very hour,' replied Undine, 'and he still loves me with the passion of a sorrowful heart.'

'He is, however, a bridegroom withal,' said Kühleborn, with a chuckle of scorn; 'and let only a few days wear away, and then comes the priest with his nuptial blessing, and then you must go up and execute your share of the business, the death of the husband with two wives.'

'I have not the power,' returned Undine, with a smile. 'Do you not remember? I have sealed up the fountain securely, not only against myself but all of the same race.'

'Still, should he leave his castle,' said Kühleborn, 'or should he once allow the fountain to be uncovered, what then? for doubtless he thinks there is no great murder in such trifles.'

'For that very reason,' said Undine, still smiling amid her tears, 'for that very reason he is this moment hovering in spirit over the Mediterranean Sea, and dreaming of this voice of warning which our *conversation* affords him. It is for this that I have *been* studious in disposing the whole vision.'

That instant Kühleborn, inflamed with rage, looked up at the knight, wrathfully threatened him, stamped

upon the ground, and then, swift as the passion that moved him, sprang up from beneath the waves. He seemed to swell in his fury to the size of a whale. Again the swans began to sing, to wave their wings, to fly; the knight seemed to be soaring away over mountains and streams, and at last to alight at Castle Ringstetten, where he awoke upon his couch.

Upon his couch he actually did awake, and his attendant, entering at the same moment, informed him, that father Heilmann was still lingering in the neighbourhood; that he had, the evening before, met with him in the forest, where he was sheltering himself under a booth, which he had formed by interweaving the branches of trees, and covering them with moss and fine brush-wood; and that to the question, "What he was doing there, since he had so firmly refused to perform the nuptial ceremony?" his answer was:

"There are yet other ceremonies to perform, beside those at the altar of marriage; and though I did not come to officiate at the wedding, I can still officiate at a very different solemnity. All things have their seasons, and for this we must wait. Besides, marrying and mourning are by no means so very far from each other, as every one, not wilfully blinded, must know full well."

In consequence of these words and of his dream, the knight made a variety of reflections, some wild and *some not* unmixed with alarm. But a man is apt to

consider it very disagreeable to give over an affa which he has once settled in his mind as certain, a therefore all went on just according to the old arrang ment.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW THE KNIGHT HULDBRAND SOLEMNIZED HIS MARRIAGE.

Should I relate to you the events of the marriage festival at Castle Ringstetten, it would seem to you as if you were viewing a crowded assemblage of bright and joyous things, but all overspread with a black mourning crape, through whose darkening veil the whole splendour appeared less to resemble pleasure, than a mockery of the nothingness of all earthly joys.

It was not because some spectral confusion disturbed the scene of festivity; for the castle, as we well know, had been secured against the mischief and menaces of water-spirits. But the knight, the fisherman, and all the guests, were unable to banish the feeling, that the chief personage of the feast was still wanting, and that this chief personage could be no other than the amiable Undine, so dear to them all.

Whenever a door was heard to open, all eyes were *involuntarily* turned in that direction; and if it was no-

thing but the steward with new dishes, or the cup-bearer with a supply of wine of higher flavour than the last, they again looked down in sadness and disappointment; and the flashes of wit and merriment which had been passing at times from one to another, ceased, and were succeeded by tears of mournful remembrance.

The bride was the least thoughtful of the company, and therefore the most happy; but even she, occasionally, found it difficult to realize the fact, that she was sitting at the head of the table, wearing a green garland and gold-embroidered garments, while Undine was lying a corse, stiff and cold, at the bottom of the Danube, or carried out by the current into the ocean. For, ever since her father had suggested something of this sort, his words were continually sounding in her ear; and this day, in particular, they would neither fade from her memory nor give over their intrusion.

Evening had scarcely arrived, when the company returned to their homes; not dismissed by the impatience of the bridegroom, as wedding parties are sometimes broken up, but constrained solely by painful associations, joyless melancholy, and forebodings of evil. Bertalda retired with her maidens, and the knight with his attendants, to undress; but these young bridemaids and bridemen, such was the gloomy tenor of this festival, made no attempt to amuse bride or bridegroom with the usual pleasantry and frolicsome good-humour of the occasion.

Bertalda wished to awake a livelier spirit: she ordered them to spread before her a brilliant set of jewels

a present from Huldbrand, together with rich apparel and veils, that she might select from among them the brightest and most beautiful for her dress in the morning. The attendants eagerly seized this opportunity of gratifying both their young mistress and themselves; and while, with many wishes and promises of happiness, they indulged their love of talking in her presence, and declared how charmed they were with all they saw, they failed not to extol the beauty of the new-married lady with their liveliest eloquence. They became more and more absorbed in this admiration and flattery, until Bertalda at last, looking in a mirror, said with a sigh:

'Ah, but do you not see plainly how freckled I am growing? Look here on the side of my neck.'

They looked at the place, and found the freckles, indeed, as their fair mistress had said; but they called them mere beauty-spots, the faintest touches of the sun, such as would only heighten the whiteness of her delicate complexion. Bertalda shook her head, and still viewed them as a blemish.

'And I could remove them,' she said at last, sighing. 'But the castle-fountain is covered, from which I formerly used to have that precious water, so purifying to the skin. O, had I this evening only a single flagon of it!'

'Is that all?' cried an alert waiting-maid, laughing, as she glided out of the apartment.

'She will not be so frantic,' said Bertalda, in a voice of inquiry and agreeably surprised, 'as to cause the stone-cover of the fountain to be taken off this very

evening?' That instant they heard the tread of men already passing along the court-yard, and could see from the window where the damsel, so kindly officious, was leading them directly up to the fountain, and that they carried levers and other instruments on their shoulders.

'It is certainly my will,' said Bertalda, with a smile, 'if it does not take them too long.' And, charmed with the conviction, that the merest hint from her was now sufficient to accomplish, what had formerly been refused with a painful reproof, she looked down upon their operations in the bright moonlight of the castle court.

The men seized the enormous stone, as if they must exert all their strength in raising it; some one of their number indeed would occasionally sigh, when he recollected they were destroying the work of their former beloved mistress. Their labour, however, was much lighter than they had expected. It seemed as if some power, from within the fountain itself, aided them in raising the stone.

'It certainly appears,' said the workmen to one another in astonishment, 'as if the confined water were become a jet or spouting fountain.' And the stone rose more and more, and, almost without the assistance of the work-people, rolled slowly away upon the pavement with a hollow sound. But an appearance, from the opening of the fountain, filled them with awe, as it rose like a *white* column of water: at first they imagined it to be a *spouting* fountain, until they perceived the rising form to be a pale female, veiled in white. She wept bitterly

raised her hands above her head, and wrung them with anguish, as with slow and solemn step she moved toward the castle. The servants shrunk back, and fled from the fountain; while the bride, pale and motionless with horror, stood with her maidens at the window. When the figure had now come close beneath their room, it looked up to them and uttered the low moaning of misery, and Bertalda thought she recognized through the veil the pale features of Undine. But the mourning form passed on as sad, reluctant, and lingering, as if going to the place of execution. Bertalda screamed to her maids to call the knight; not one of them dared to stir from her place; and even the bride herself became again mute, as if trembling at the sound of her own voice.

While they continued standing at the window, overpowered with terror and motionless as statues, the mysterious wanderer had entered the castle, ascended the well-known stairs, and traversed the well-known halls, her tears ever flowing in silent woe. Alas, with what different emotions had she once wandered through these rooms!

The knight had in the meantime dismissed his attendants. Half undressed and in deep dejection, he was standing before a large mirror; a wax taper burned dimly beside him. At this moment he heard a low tapping at his door, the least perceptible touch of a finger. Undine had formerly tapped in this way, when she wished to amuse him with her endearing sportiveness.

'It is all illusion! a mere freak of fancy!' said he to himself. 'I must to my nuptial bed.'

'You must, indeed, but to a cold one!' he heard a voice, choked with sobs, repeat from without; and then he saw in the mirror, that the door of his room was slowly, slowly opened, and the white wanderer entered, and gently secured it behind her.

'They have opened the fountain,' said she in a low tone, 'and now I am here, and you must die.'

He felt, in the shock and death-pause of his heart, that this must indeed be his doom; but, covering his eyes with his hands, he cried: 'Do not, in my death-hour, do not drive me to distraction with terror. If you have a visage of horror behind that veil, do not lift it! Take my life, but let me not see you.'

'Alas!' replied the wanderer, 'will you not then look upon me once more? I am as beautiful now as when you wooed me on the peninsula!'

'O would to God it were so!' sighed Huldbrand, 'and that I might die by a kiss from you!'

'Most willingly do I grant your wish, my dearest love,' said she. And as she threw back her veil, her dear face met his view, smiling with celestial beauty. Trembling with love and the awe of approaching death, the knight stooped to give and receive the embrace. She kissed him with the holy kiss of Heaven; but she relaxed not her hold, pressing him more passionately *in her* arms, and weeping as if she would weep away *her soul.* Tears rushed into the knight's eyes, while a *thrill both* of bliss and agony shot through his heart

until he at last expired, sinking softly back from her fair arms, and resting upon the pillow of his couch, a corse.

'I have wept him to death!' said she to some domestics, who met her in the ante-chamber; and passing through the terrified group, she went slowly out and disappeared in the fountain.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOW THE KNIGHT HULDBRAND WAS BURIED.

Father Heilmann had returned to the castle as soon as the death of the lord of Ringstetten was made known in the neighbourhood; and he arrived at the very hour when the monk who had married the unfortunate couple was hurrying from the door, overcome with dismay and horror.

When father Heilmann was informed of this, he replied: "It is all well; and now come the duties of my office, in which I have no need of an assistant."

He then began to console the bride, now become a widow, small as was the advantage her worldly and light-minded spirit derived from his kindness.

The old fisherman, on the other hand, though severely afflicted, was far more resigned in regard to the fate of his son-in-law and the calamity of his daughter; and while Bertalda could not refrain from accusing Undine as a murderess and fiendlike enchantress, the old man *calmly said*: 'The event, after all, could not have happened otherwise. I see nothing in it but the judgment of God; and no one, I am sure, could have his hear

more pierced by the death of Huldbrand, than she who was obliged to accomplish his doom, the poor forsaken Undine!'

He then assisted in arranging the funeral solemnities as suited the rank of the deceased. The knight was to be interred in a village church-yard, in whose consecrated ground were the graves of his ancestors; a place which they, as well as himself, had endowed with rich privileges and gifts. His shield and helmet lay upon his coffin, ready to be lowered with it into the grave, for lord Huldbrand of Ringstetten had died the last of his race; the mourners began their sorrowful march, lifting their melancholy songs amid the calm unclouded heaven; father Heilmann preceded the procession, bearing a lofty crucifix, while Bertalda followed in her misery, supported by her aged father.

While proceeding in this manner, they suddenly saw in the midst of the dark-habited mourning females, in the widow's train, a snow-white figure, closely veiled, and wringing its hands in the wild vehemence of sorrow. Those next to whom it moved, seized with a secret dread, started back or sideways; and owing to their movements, the others, next to whom the white stranger now came, were terrified still more, so as to produce almost a complete disarrangement of the funeral train. Some of the military escort were emboldened to address the figure, and attempt to remove it from the procession, but it seemed to vanish from under *their hands*, and yet was immediately seen advancing *again, with* slow and solemn step, among the followers

of the body. At last, in consequence of the shrinking away of the attendants, it came close behind Bertalda. It now moved so slowly, that the widow was not aware of its presence, and it walked meekly on behind, neither suffering nor creating disturbance.

This continued until they came to the church-yard, where the procession formed a circle round the open grave. Then it was that Bertalda perceived her unbidden companion, and prompted half by anger and half by terror, she commanded her to depart from the knight's place of final rest. But the veiled female, shaking her head with a gentle refusal, raised her hands toward Bertalda in lowly supplication, by which she was greatly moved, and could not but remember with tears, how Undine had shown such sweetness of spirit on the Danube, when she held out to her the coral necklace.

Father Heilmann now motioned with his hand, and gave order for all to observe perfect stillness, that over the body, whose mound was well nigh formed, they might breathe a prayer of silent devotion. Bertalda knelt without speaking; and all knelt, even the grave-diggers who had now finished their work. But when they rose from this breathing of the heart, the white stranger had disappeared. On the spot where she had kneeled, a little spring, of silver brightness, was gushing out from the green turf, and it kept swelling and flowing onward with a low murmur, till it almost encircled the mound of the knight's grave; it then continued its course, and emptied itself into a calm lake, which lay by the side of the consecrated ground. Even

to this day, the inhabitants of the village point out the spring; — and they cannot but cherish the belief, that it is the poor deserted Undine who in this manner still fondly encircles her beloved in her arms.

THE
FORTIETH HOUR.

It profits not,
The wisdom of the wise. The meek of heart
And humble, in the Lord who set their trust,
And lean on his stability, alone
Know peace. Amid the turbulence and strife
Of passions, darkly tempesting mankind,
Their day-spring from within around them beams
Pure light; and to their spirit, yet on earth,
The world, in its variety of woe,
Speaks of the God who made it, and proclaims
Thy work, eternal Wisdom.

SAUL.

THE

FORTIETH HOUR.

CHAPTER I.

WHO SLEEPS WITH A DEMON AT HIS EAR, AND WHO WAKE HIM.

Do you love the wanderings of the unfettered mind? Or have you, in the bitterness of disappointed hope, distrusted the wisdom of Heaven? Come to the banks of the Almadora: come, speed on wings of wind, to the views and events that await you. And are you come?

It is the deep of night; the winds are wild; a summer shower beats heavily on the mansion of Muzoil. What form do you behold, standing at the door of his dwelling? Is it a Spirit, viewing the waters, the woods, the dead waste of night, the clouds illumined by lightning? Listen to his voice.

GUARDIAN SPIRIT.

How sublime is darkness! What a sweep was there! *I love* these sights and these sounds. There is some-

thing in them unspeakably majestic. I love to look abroad, when to the human eye scarcely an object is distinguishable: I love to pass through this pavilion of the Almighty, and never am I more sensible of his immediate presence.

Nor are softer views undelightful; — the moonlight evenings of summer, the features of nature veiled in partial obscurity, the light fleecy vapour curling along the Almadora, the mingled voices of midnight, the music of my little winged friend that soothes the ear of melancholy, the fresh breeze among the elm and poplar boughs, the low murmur that comes from the river, . . .

SPIRIT OF THE ALMADORA,
coming up from the water.

And do you, brother Spirit, admire the summer ripplings along my shore, and the low music of my waves? Thanks for the compliment. . . . Your charge reposes?

GUARDIAN SPIRIT.

He slumbers, but the balmy influence of rest will not visit him. His day-dreams he once thought his best enjoyment, but they are now full of anguish; his night-visions were once illumined by light from heaven, but they are now darkened with gloom and disquietude. Sad and weary he retires; he is full of *tossing* until the day-spring; and he rises unrefreshed. *He has* just closed his eyelids in oblivion.

SPIRIT OF THE ALMADORA.

What may this mean? Whenever he has bathed in my pure stream, I have perceived by his countenance, that although a shade of pensiveness may be mingled with the colouring of his mind, he is of a temperament not far removed from sober cheerfulness.

GUARDIAN SPIRIT.

You judge with your wonted penetration. Tempered mirth appears to be most congenial to his disposition; but so volatile are his spirits, when diverted from their usual calmness, that they immediately rush toward extremes, the extremes of hope or of dejection and despair.

SPIRIT OF THE ALMADORA.

That is contrary to the wisdom of God and man,—even bordering on folly. He needs the chastenings of severe experience. The germ of heavenly fortitude must be made to flourish. A few such tempers I have known; and I have remarked, that they are formed to be very happy or very miserable. They seem almost unfitted for the realities of earthly affairs. It is the will of Him, who disposes all things in wisdom.

GUARDIAN SPIRIT.

Such a being you now see slumbering before you. *You observe his* agitation?

SPIRIT OF THE ALMADORA.

Assuredly, — on his couch. No wall or curtain, you are sensible, can intercept the vision of spirits. But, my brother, what has tinged his soul with the gall of bitterness? I am much interested in his welfare.

GUARDIAN SPIRIT.

Are you? May the Eternal smile upon you! This Father of spirits and men viewed the features of his soul, and saw that they were not right. In mercy he commissioned the Angel of his Will, who removed from him, one after another, all he most loved and cherished on earth, and left him at last in utter loneliness. If he needed the chastenings of severe experience, he has certainly had them. And now, when he views his fate in the glass of reflexion, he passionately wishes that God would take him also to himself. He longs, yet shudders, to lift the awful veil; But those mysteries he feels to be wisely, most wisely concealed from the eye of . . . . Ha! do you see that FORM standing by the couch of Muzoil, and staring him in the face! What words is he breathing in his ear!

VOICE OF THE DEMON.

Thou wast not born for bliss. Forbear, thou ill-starred wretch, forbear to anticipate bright visions of *joy.* Thou wilt "drop from existence like a withered

leaf, unseen and unregarded. God hath abandoned thee." In wretchedness thou camest into being, in wretchedness art thou to journey on, in wretchedness art thou to die. Think of this, thou withered leaf, and forbear to indulge in those dreams of bliss, which thou art never, never to realize.

GUARDIAN SPIRIT.

What Fiend art thou, that intrudest upon our retirement! Fly, fly, thou imp of darkness; show thy hateful visage no more; or feel the force of heavenly displeasure.

SPIRIT OF THE ALMADORA.

Do you know that terrific shape?

GUARDIAN SPIRIT.

An evil demon, as I imagine, intent on purposes of malice.

SPIRIT OF THE ALMADORA.

Evil he certainly is, and intent on purposes of malice, but not a demon from the region of lost spirits: he is the man-demon Logoul, companion of the old magician, whose place of abode I once mentioned to you. That magician, as I then said, is not wholly depraved; I cherish much hope of his conversion from evil; but Logoul seems to have eradicated every human feeling. He *will venture* into our presence no more.

GUARDIAN SPIRIT.

And our slumbering friend shall lose nothing by this venomous attempt to augment his misery.

SPIRIT OF THE ALMADORA.

No, by the divinity of the ocean! He came into being upon my banks, — there are no banks more lovely that embellish the rivers of the north, — and he ought not to be unworthy of his native soil. That Hell-doomed has decided me in his favour. Shall magicians and demons of malice infuse their venom, and shall no spirits of health be found to soothe and to save? Forbid it, Heaven. Let us befriend him: A secret impulse inspires me.

GUARDIAN SPIRIT.

Lo! the shower is passing off, and a soothing calm begins to pervade the scene. Ah! do you see that little star through the opening cloud? and do you read its meaning?

SPIRIT OF THE ALMADORA.

Yes, I do read its meaning of benevolence. Heaven permits and commands us to teach him wisdom, and with the tenderness of the heart. — Tremble, magi*cian!* tremble, Logoul!

GUARDIAN SPIRIT.

Let us this moment begin the good work. Shall we soothe him with our favourite air, *Dreaming on the Water?* Touch your instrument of power.

MUZOIL,

awaking from a perturbed vision.

Am I in heaven? Whence come these notes of enchantment, that breathe upon the silence of night? Who would not listen forever? How calm after the tempest! It is a propitious omen. Not a breath moves a leaf; the moon gleams upon the smooth Almadora; the sky is blue and starry; the stars twinkle in the water. O what freshness pervades my senses! I could drink it in forever.

VOICE *of the* GUARDIAN SPIRIT, *from above.*

Listen! there is something even more heavenly than nature. You may imbibe the pure breath of *faith*, the heaven of confidence in God, forever. Only submit to the wisdom of the All-wise, — only with cheerful and holy confidence endure the anguish of frustrated hope,— and such gifts await you as Infinite Perfection grants to those it loves. The moment draws near. Walk forth by the Almadora; let the calm of its waters soothe the tumult of your soul; let it render you tran*quil and resigned*; and remember, Muzoil, that the

Eye of Mercy ever beams upon the obedient. Be comforted. Rich blessings are in store for you. They appear when least expected. Walk forth and bid them welcome.

CHAPTER II.

HOW MUZOIL MET A FAIR DAMSEL BY THE ALMADORA, AND WHERE THEY WENT.

As commanded by the voice of the Invisible, Muzoil wandered forth, inhaled the breezy freshness that came from the south, breathing from the pine woods beyond the river, and listened in a reverie to the tide softly stealing onward to the ocean. The elements were calm. All nature seemed hushed to repose. Still the form of Logoul, as well as his presages of malice, continued to haunt his imagination, while the soothings of the Invisible were accounted the mockery of a dream. 'I am not only bereaved of all most dear,' he groaned, 'but some fiend of hell is seeking my own destruction. My bodily eye was closed, but I saw him, most distinctly I saw him.'

There stood Muzoil by the Almadora, and all was *tranquil* but the spirit that possessed him. His soul *formed a striking contrast with the calmness of earth.*

air, and water: it was depressed, despondent, and at times wild with alarm.

Unable to feel in its mysterious power the sleeping tranquillity around him, and uninfluenced by the assurances that had been just made to him, he was on the point of returning homeward, languid and melancholy. His better spirit however prevailed, and he resolved to proceed as far as the Almadora Ravine, which was one of his usual resorts in trouble; when lifting his eye toward the moon, that looked tranquilly from a mountain in the west, as it began to verge toward the horizon, he saw something afar off in the intervening space, almost as if moving on its flood of beams, very small, and but dimly distinguishable, and it every moment enlarged as it came near. Was it a human being? It descended, it came down the declivity, it stood on the bank-turf beside him.

Powers of language, can ye describe the form that beamed on his view? The little moonlight being, though almost of Ariel slenderness, was of the perfect stature of woman. Her robe was of the palest violet. She had a countenance shaded with an air very slightly meditative, but the modest reserve of its expression was accompanied with a smile of ineffable beauty. Was it the expression of Heaven that beamed serenely there? Did it touch his heart with a gleam of delight? Were all sorrow and languor forgotten in the beautiful *object* before him?

All these things were. The moment she descended, *almost* as if alighting like a dove, and while she drew

from her bosom a small vial, and rapidly poured its misty contents into the air, such a magic loveliness effused itself around, that nothing filled his conception but thought of her. It was wonderful. Although her form was lovely, though her full eyes were dark and lustrous, and her mouth of such sweetness of expression, as stole into the heart; still persons of a more mirthful mind would have viewed her, — it would be profanation to say with indifference, — but they *would* have viewed her as far less beautiful than Muzoil did. Do we, indeed, "*receive* but what we *give?*"

Perceiving his astonishment, she gave one of her sweetest smiles at the embarrassment visible in his manner, and with a readiness peculiar to her sex exclaimed: 'If you *will* wander the banks of a stream so attractive, and at the very witching time of night, you ought to incur the inconvenience of a few surprises.'

Who will dare picture the meaning of her eyes at that moment? With pleasantries so innocent, with simplicities so artless, did she relieve his embarrassment, that he soon felt completely at ease in her company. They rambled amid those scenes of beauty, until they had almost talked down the moon. With the egotism of lovers, so delightful to themselves, they still wandered on, she disclosing the wonders of the region she had just returned from visiting, and he in his turn describing, as accurately as he could, the peculiarities *of his native* banks; and if with greater and greater *frequency, he* intermingled a sentiment more warm than *suited a geographical description, shall we blame him?*

Seraphina, it is certain, was far from viewing either his admiration or his tenderness as inexcusable. She knew herself to be worthy of inspiring affection, and in the emotion of Muzoil she rejoiced to discern the genuine evidence of truth. True, indeed, he most assuredly was. Had he not reason for being strongly attached? Every feature of her face, every look she gave, every gesture she made, every thought she uttered, every image she employed to enforce or illustrate her ideas, — the radiant bloom of her countenance, the intellectual light which shone through it, and above all, the outbreathing of real, unaffected sincerity, — these all contributed to produce on him a powerful effect. How he drank in the truth and loveliness pervading her! It was indeed a "fair encounter of two most rare affections."—What will be their issue?

Just as they ascended the summit of the highest eminence upon the bank, with the exception of the mountain in the west, they stopped somewhat fatigued, and his fair companion leaning more heavily upon his arm, which made his bosom heave with an ecstasy not to be imagined, thus pursued:

'I have been gratified with your plain, unembellished description of the scenes of your home, although you will find I have enjoyed opportunities of surveying their varieties, inferior to few. My father is from the *country* of Magicians, and is himself one of their number. After considering the attractions and disadvantages of various climates, and residing several years in the more inviting, he at last, a month before

death of my mother, when I had attained the age of twelve, selected this spot as his permanent abode. He preferred it to all others, and here, within view of her grave, he hopes that his wanderings will cease. In consequence of the filial assiduities which I have endeavoured to show him during the five years of our residence here, there seems to be no indulgence whatever which he is unwilling to allow me. Fourteen nights ago, when yonder full moon resembled the bright edge of a sickle, he imparted to me something of the power of magic, and in the fulness of fatherly kindness permitted me to visit his native home and mine, far distant beyond the western ocean. The short time I have been absent, has fleeted away with the swiftness of moments of love, and I now return to my dear adopted banks, — return to my usual duties and pursuits. Will you descend with me to the palace of my father? It is far down, underneath the grass plot where we are now standing.'

Daughter of a magician! Palace of enchantment beneath the banks of the Almadora! Suddenly become enamoured of a female magician! — These particulars shot through the brain of Muzoil with the rapidity of lightning. Could he suspect such modesty, such undissembling openness of heart? No, circumstanced as he was, — under the influence of more than magic illusion, even the strong energy of his heart's first *affection, — it* was impossible to refuse her request. *Yes, had she* been the daughter of Khawla herself, *he could* not have done it. Besides, whatever he

might think of her father, he could not but believe herself one of the best of human beings.

So he gratefully accepted her offered favour.

Seraphina smiled upon him benignly, and three times clapping her hands, the green-sward before them parted, and a narrow way of marble steps appeared below. She put her arm within his again, and they began their descent. Scarcely had they gone down a dozen steps, ere the earth closed over them, and the passage was illumined by golden lamps suspended on either side.

How he longed to pour out his soul to her as they leisurely descended! but timidity, awe, or I know not what, prevented. How his heart throbbed! She must have felt and even heard its throbbing: she must have discovered his violent emotion. But he continued silent: some whispered words of endearment, a pressure of the hand, and looks of impassioned tenderness, were the sole manifestation of what he felt. They had passed through eleven brazen doors, with long intervals between them, and each one opened on the waving of her hand; but as the twelfth expanded its folding leaves, they seemed ushered into the Paradise of Irem, — or rather into what might be termed the spiritual scene of the natural scene above. Many, indeed most of the objects, strikingly resembled those *of the* upper world, save their surpassing beauty. Still *there* were new heavens and a new earth: by magic *power the* moon still shone in the west, but it seemed *to emit* a lovelier light; the stars beamed with soft

lustre, the river flowed with sweeter murmur, and hills, valleys, and woods melted into a mellow, dusky, indistinct plain; but, after all, the perfection of magic is no more than the simplicity of nature. The object of this subterranean abode, a retreat from the world so deep within the earth, was obvious; they who formed it, made magnificence much less their aim than concealment.

On the margin of the stream, and surrounded by a grove of beech, maple, and larch, stood the Palace of Enchantment, whose lofty walls of white marble gleamed faintly in the moonlight, like the visionary dimness of an ice-coated wood. No other mansion was visible. Within the grove a garden, from which was wafted the perfume of flowers, gave additional beauty to this solitary but magnificent edifice; and far as the eye extended, no obstruction or inequalities interrupted the dark verdure of the waving surface. The soft breeze sighed among the boughs of the grove as the lovers advanced, but they paused not a moment to enjoy its freshness, or to listen to its mystic sound.

As they drew near the western side of the mansion remote from the front, a small door unclosed of its own accord, seeming to welcome their admission; and they moved lightly into a long entry, passed through another side-passage on the right, ascended a flight of stairs, and entered a chamber on the second story, fronting the water toward the south. It was the south-western *chamber of the story.*

No sooner had they entered the apartment than the

fair conductor of Muzoil vanished without any intimation. Indeed she may not have stepped within the door. He looked round, and she was gone. All was still as the depth of night could make it: no sound broke upon the impressive silence, save the melancholy music of the breeze, and the fancied or real whisperings of spirits. Little could now be discerned without, except the setting moon beaming feebly through the grove, and giving a steady farewell look, a melancholy smile, to these scenes of magic beauty.

Going to the doors of his chamber, Muzoil found them both fastened. Suspicion began to grow upon him. But what motive could Seraphina have to lead him into peril? or why should she even allow him to fall into harm? He so unequivocally merited the reverse, that he immediately dismissed the suspicion. 'It is an unseasonable hour,' said he; 'she cannot introduce me to her father now;' and having no reason for complaint except confinement, he patiently and confidingly awaited the conclusion of these witcheries. — What, I ask again, will be their issue?

The room was completely furnished. A dim light, resembling that of a single planet, discovered a table in the centre, spread with delicacies of every description. All tempting and refreshing fruits were there. It was a table fitly furnished for the King of the Genii. Nothing but society was wanting. He ate and drank very sparingly; and then, reclining on one of the richest of couches in the south-western corner of his apartment, he mused on the mysterious events of the night

All *seemed* the merest illusion of the senses, but still he *saw* himself there in a palace of enchantment; and wherever one may be, how can he well dispute the evidence of hearing, seeing, feeling, taste, and touch?

The moment he lay down, the table vanished, the star-like taper was extinguished by an invisible hand, and he was lulled to sleep by a strain of music, very low and soft. A single musician drew such touching tones from some unknown instrument, as almost overpowered him. Did they resemble the minstrelsy of the departed? Every note thrilled his soul. So unearthly was the strain,

> "It seemed from other worlds to steal;
> Thus falling, falling from afar,
> As if some melancholy star
> Had mingled with her light her sighs,
> And dropped them from the skies."

The music at length insensibly died away, but the impression still dwelt upon the ear of memory; and so powerfully were the feelings of Muzoil excited, that as old recollections came over him, along with that of his interview with Seraphina, tears gushed copiously from his eyes. He did not sob, but half willingly, half unwillingly, wept. It was a strange and *mixed emotion*, which he had never felt before. At *the same time*, he was happier than he had been for

many a weary month, — far happier than he had ever dared to promise himself. Recommending himself to God, he soon fell asleep, and dreamed over and over his adventures of the night.

CHAPTER III.

MUZOIL GETS A MAGIC RING, AND OVERHEARS A BLACK COMPLOT.

When Muzoil awoke, daylight had dawned over the sea, — the sea, river, and scenes of magic. The sun rose, unveiling to the right and the left the long expanse of the Almadora, which lay trembling in liquid light. Imagination can alone paint the scenes unfolded, and to imagination I leave them. The following billet lay upon his pillow, the superscription not yet dry.

TO THE WANDERER OF THE ALMADORA.

Last night, my friend, you were undoubtedly amazed at being confined, as well as at my sudden departure; but before you judge me, consider my motive. Forgive me, dear Muzoil, I wished to discover what manner of spirit you were of, and for a reason not now to be *mentioned*, I desired to conceal your admittance here *from my* father. Be assured it will grieve me, if you

hold me inexcusable. It was the only way I could render your concealment sure.

"But why study concealment at all?" I seem to hear the ingenuous Muzoil exclaim. Trust me, my friend, I have a reason — a reason which you yourself will hereafter acknowledge to be a good one. Will you trust me? Will you confide in my discretion? I think, — I am persuaded you will.

Though you knew it not, I have proved you to my mind. I never entertained a doubt, indeed, that I should find you all you appeared to be, and more than all; I therefore made the trial of your faith as gentle and short as possible.

How did you like the music of my magic instrument? An invention of my own. I have named it the tearful mystery.

My other plans, I fear, are discovered. My father, and an associate of his whom, — among a thousand other things, — I forgot to mention to you last night, seem to be employing their wits this morning on some unknown project. What makes me more fearful is this: my father accuses me in general terms of misbehaviour; he seems, too, unusually sullen and irritable, and is this moment performing a charm to deprive me of the power of magic.

When my power is gone, you will no longer remain in concealment, unless I prevent the evil now. I therefore, before he accomplishes his purpose, send you this needful information. You observe the slender cord I inclose. It is mysteriously woven of a single hair.

Place it upon the little finger of your left hand, and it will render you invisible to the eye of mortals. I have just made it for you, guided by instructions derived from the magician, who accompanies my father.

Of this privilege of invisibility make whatever use you please, with one exception: Come not near my apartment within FORTY HOURS, — FORTY HOURS from the moment we entered the Palace. After leaving you, I perused the constellations, and discovered that if we meet within that time, FATE WILL FROWN. Therefore observe this injunction with a scrupulousness the most sacred. Life and more than life depend upon it.

Be discreet and confiding. Fear no detection, while the Spirit of the Ring is your friend.

My billet has grown into a letter. Excuse its imperfections. It is the first attempt I ever made to write in your language. But I must not indulge my fond delay a moment longer. I hear my father ascending from below, — no doubt to confine *me* to *my* apartment.

Do not forget the two precautions, nor your friend

SERAPHINA.

Having placed the hair-ring as directed, Muzoil returned the following answer. No sooner was it finished and folded, than it instantly disappeared.

TO SERAPHINA.

Forget you! Dear Seraphina, you either think unworthily of yourself, or imagine my memory to be planet-struck, — (struck by those same wicked constellations you have been perusing,) before the time. Both these surmises are imaginary.

Your imprisonment, — is it not possible for *me* to free *you?* My invisibility may afford me opportunity. Why may we not escape from this mansion of magic? There is another, the home of truth and tenderness, open to receive us.

I feel more grateful for your gift, than the cold language of words can express. O were I with you, and using the more expressive language of looks and tones! Why this injunction not to see you! What heavier misfortune than absence from you! Forty hours are forty ages. Why should we both be invisible, you without the ring and I with it?

O Seraphina, dearest Seraphina, could you know the effect of your melody! The notes seemed touched by a messenger from heaven, and in reality they were. They appear to have perfectly transformed me. Angel of light, when shall I see you again? O when shall I see you, and call you my own Seraphina! Forgive me. When I remember the desolation of my cherished hopes; when I call to mind the gloom and despair *of last* evening, at the hour I started from visions of *horror,* (as among a thousand other things I believe

I told you,) and walked forth by the Almadora; — the possibility of your love transports me beyond myself. Who can tell the consequences of that hour? I can only say, to employ one of the strong expressions of a language you understand so well, that I have no dearer hope than to be forevermore

Your own

MUZOIL.

Muzoil went immediately toward the eastern door, which now opened of itself before him, and slowly wandered through the endless suites of apartments. He found them filled with curiosities, the workmanship of men and genies, but he felt no disposition to examine them. He was absorbed in a more human interest, and the burden of suspense and impatience pressed heavily upon his soul.

Entering a small remote chamber, the door of which stood open, . . . what were his horror and consternation, when the accursed Logoul met his view! Not one circumstance of his vision, not a single feature of this terrific man-demon, had faded from his memory. How thankful he felt, when he recollected the gift of Seraphina, the blessed ring of invisibility! Logoul and the old magician were in violent dispute. The former continued in a voice of fury:—

LOGOUL.

I would, — I would, — lightning blast me if I would *not. I know* this young Muzoil for my foe. I know

my fate to be somehow connected with his. When Seraphina returned, I had purposed to destroy him, but some higher power interposed, — his own guardian angel, perhaps, or it may have been the confederate of that angel, the Spirit of the Almadora, — and my vial scheme proved abortive.

OLD MAGICIAN.

Broken her promise, — deceived and outwitted me at last. No trust, no confidence, can be reposed in them. I always knew how artful they were, but never suspected the artless simplicity of Seraphina, the very image of her whom I loved and lost, and who lies buried yonder beneath these banks. Would that I were with her!

LOGOUL.

Artless simplicity! How often have I said to you,— 'Never trust a woman!' — and now too late, you see the value of those four words. The foot of a stranger, wherever he may be now concealed, has trod the pavement of our enchanted palace, — and do you not know the consequence?

OLD MAGICIAN.

Too well I know it. Yes, inevitable destruction, unless our efforts prevent. Death is the consequence. *You*, *I*, the Stranger, or my daughter ——

LOGOUL.

Must die!

OLD MAGICIAN.

Let us then exert the powers we possess. Our enchantments shall bring this intruder out of his cave of concealment; and then THE FORTIETH HOUR, — not a moment more is allowed, — THE FORTIETH HOUR must either give us security ——

LOGOUL.

Or the flames of ruin.

OLD MAGICIAN.

The first law of nature is self-preservation. Still I ——

LOGOUL.

To business then. The words are, the Stranger, Seraphina ——

OLD MAGICIAN.

Not Seraphina, O not Seraphina! Not one hair of *her* head shall perish.

LOGOUL.

The words are, I repeat, the stranger, Seraphina, *or the sweets* of perdition.

Father of mercies! how Muzoil shuddered as they spoke! That they should destroy this innocent maiden for love of him! — what other motive than that of love could induce her to admit him to these forbidden scenes? — It must never be. But, alas! what could he do for her? He was distracted. He cared not for himself, — but that undeserving sufferer! — he instantly wrote, acquainted her with their exact situation, again suggested the possibility of their escape, and offered her the ring. But she returned for answer that she had little or no fear, and refused to take the ring, advising him to await the event in peace, and not to approach her solitude on any account whatever.

'The fortieth hour,' she added, 'will soon pass by, and all will be well. I have no regret for the past, and no fear for the future. My faith in God is immoveable, and my regard for you, — why should a true heart withhold the acknowledgment of its holiest impulse? — my affection for you possesses the strong energy of my faith. Escape we cannot; but believing and waiting, hoping the best and even enduring the worst,—these are all within our power.'

CHAPTER IV.

MUZOIL DREAMS A DREAM, AND SEES A VISION.

THE second morning came. Muzoil sent by his faithful messenger the following letter:

TO SERAPHINA.

The eventful day has dawned. Last night I ascended the roof walk of the palace, and what was the first object that saluted me? Nothing less brilliant than that planet which we called the Star of the Almadora. It was trembling through its thin veil of mist westward from the pole. How forcibly it reminded me of Seraphina, another night-wanderer of the Almadora, more bright and beautiful still. But I have no occasion for any remembrancer of earth or heaven. Still my emotions of tenderness are mingled with those of fear and apprehension. Should our first meeting be our last! — Should I lose you for ever! The mournful presentiment continually crowds upon my imagination. *O will the time* ever come when the bliss of our first *hour shall be* tasted again!

This is the weakness of a too affectionate heart, the apprehensiveness of a severely tried spirit. I feel and confess it; and I have prayed for more of your unwavering confidence.

A murmuring sound came from below. I went down, but saw no one and heard nothing. The very silence of death prevailed.

You must have witnessed the violence of the tempest, that came on after midnight. I imagined you would rise, and with a hope of catching some momentary glimpse of you through your windows, I walked backward and forward before your chamber, but did not see the object of my wishes. You did not suppose me there amid the strange portents of this region of magic. But what are portents to me!

As I stood near the northern gate of the garden, a mysterious signal came in a sweep of the wind. I listened, but it was not repeated. This tempest may have been raised by the malice of Logoul, or it may forerun calamities now rushing upon us all. Did you tell me, or was it a dream of my own, that peaceful and unclouded skies ever gladden your abode? I hope you sometimes find it difficult to distinguish what you dream from actual fact.

Musing upon the mysteries of existence, and reluctantly withdrawing my eyes from your windows, I reentered my own safe asylum, repeating to myself the *words* of an invisible spirit. It was only a few *moments* before I met you by the Almadora, when a *sweet* voice addressed me from above. As I w

you every thing, I may have told you this; if I have not, I must tell you now. "Only submit," said the voice, "only submit to the wisdom of the All-wise,— only with cheerful and holy confidence endure the anguish of frustrated hope, — and such gifts await you as Infinite Perfection grants to those it loves. The moment draws near. Rich blessings are in store for you. They appear when least expected. Walk forth by the Almadora, and bid them welcome."

The voice spoke in mystery, but I determined to obey its command. I walked forth by the Almadora, hoping indeed that I might welcome the fulfilling of the promise, but doubting more. I now understand something, I trust, of the purposes of Providence. May we both have strength of faith to confide in their wisdom. The dawn of hope has touched our horizon, and we are longing for the day, but the gloom of night is still around us. May we have grace to believe and to wait.

My dreams however have been most sweet. Scarcely had I fallen into a slumber on my couch, when I seemed to be reclining upon the bank of the Almadora, and kissing the spot where you first descended from the mountain, on your return from your visit beyond the western waters. At that moment I espied a bright-eyed maiden coming up the bank with the speed of a spirit. She rather flew than touched the green turf, and like yourself, when you *came down the* mountain side, she was with me.

'*And pray* who was she?'

Seraphina herself. Your countenance wore the very smile of heaven; you were all animation and loveliness; but the instant I opened my lips to address you, my eye glanced upon a dark cloud hanging over the Almadora, and on its obscurity we saw these words written in hues of light:

"How beautiful the blush of morning! But a cloud, tinged by the moonbeam, and through whose foldings of silver smiles a Star, is the lustre of spiritual beauty."

The moment I withdrew my eyes from this image of mystery, and rested them upon your form and features, you seemed to fade into air like a column of mist. Do interpret for me.

Your father and Logoul, — (I grieve that your father suffers that demon to be his companion,) — have not appeared since I listened to their dreadful discourse. Are they plotting our destruction? Dear Seraphina, I am immoveably resolved: if it be the will of Heaven that one of us must perish, most willingly will I part with this worthless life, — no, not worthless, if it be dear to you; but whatever be its worth, I most willingly resign it for you. O what is life, when all its delights are gone! May I be able to hope the best, and endure the worst.

I long, yet tremble for the moment of fate, — the fortieth hour.

Your own

Muzoul.

CHAPTER V.

HOW MUZOIL SAW A SPIRIT, AND, EVEN AT THE PERIL OF HIS LIFE, BROKE HIS MAGIC RING.

During the remainder of the day, Muzoil wandered over this mansion of mysteries. While Seraphina remained, he would not have escaped, even had it been in his power. He could take no refreshment, although his trusty spirit furnished him abundantly. No one appeared. The magicians had failed in their efforts of enchantment. The ring and the spirit of the ring were too powerful for them. No sound, but the distant roaring of the ocean, broke the awful stillness. Evening came, hot and suffocating. Darkness followed with unusual rapidity. No twilight, no moon, no stars. Fancy or fear foreboded something unknown and terrible.

Wearied with doing nothing, effecting nothing, — what could he effect? — he wandered up the river bank, until the Palace had become invisible in the darkness; and feeling very sad and sick at heart, he sat down on a rock near the water. Resting his elbow upon his

knee, and his cheek upon his hand, he sat musing upon the hour of fate, that seemed to be drawing nigh; when, toward the south, a bright spot of fire appeared at considerable distance on the river. It grew, it swelled, it became a blaze of glory, it lighted up the whole shore and stream; when from this involving illumination burst a youthful Form, habited in a flowing robe. He slowly moved toward Muzoil. There was a winning vivacity in his air, a glow of beauty in his features, while his eye beamed forth the soft lustre of benevolence. A something, half gay and half melancholy, spoke in the tones of his voice, as he exclaimed:

'Muzoil, arise! Behold the Spirit of the Almadora before you. Listen to what I say. I can read the heart.

'Two evenings ago, you met and you loved a sylph-like maiden of these Banks. You were in my dominion, (for what is magic to me!) and I witnessed all your movements. Yes, that burning blush confirms the truth of what I say. Do not imagine I condemn your feelings. What were man without them? In their purest manifestation, these emotions ally you to beings of a nature altogether spiritual. But you are young, inexperienced, under the influence of peculiar bereavement, and therefore more exposed to the power of delusion.

'I ask you at once, then, is Seraphina worthy of *your* affection? I acknowledge, that although daughter *of* a magician, I have esteemed her one of the best,

the most undeceiving of your race. Such she has been, but is she so now, since her visit to the country of magicians? Tenderness for your feelings might make me withhold my fear that she is unworthy, yet truth and affection bid me warn you to beware.

'I speak not of the power she received from her father. In that, perhaps she was an innocent recipient, unconscious of evil. But when she returned, did I not see her diffuse around you the mist of magic, such as no unaided mortal could withstand? You yourself saw her, but you saw not my friend, your guardian spirit, counteract the fatal purpose. Can this be like that simplicity, which thinketh no evil? Beware. Such illusions of magic, unless thwarted by the interposition of Heaven, lead to immediate destruction; and such, you have reason to fear, was the secret object of Seraphina.

'This is not all: the worst remains to be told. To accomplish some private scheme, which she may believe to be justifiable, she has given you, possibly indeed without knowing its fatal effect, the deadly hair-ring of invisibility, which none of humankind ever wore two days with life. Burst, burst it asunder. The hand of death is even now upon you. You become visible indeed, and exposed to peril; but make the wisest use of your own powers, while you put unlimited confidence in God, and the event cannot be such as you need fear. Remember these words of kindness *and caution.* The Spirit of the Almadora is *assuredly your* friend.'

The Spirit gave a tearful and melancholy smile, and with all his glory vanished like a dream.

Surprise, astonishment, and anguish choked the utterance of the wretched Muzoil. 'This,' he at length exclamed, 'this is my sole unexpected calamity, — a thunder-stroke from a cloudless sky. And is that fair excellence, — what I fondly imagined to be such, — is that fair excellence no more! Is Seraphina, SERAPHINA become beautiful unworthiness! If there is truth in woman, it is impossible. And yet the voice of the Spirit still rings in my ear, 'Beware!' Oh, are all my joys thus to glide away in the stream of disappointment! Better had death ended at once both life and misery.'

Muzoil was bewildered. He was deserving of the deepest commiseration. What should he do? He was man, and human feeling prevailed. Fearless of consequences, and strong in the conviction of the Spirit's veracity, he tore the ring from his finger, burst its fatal circlet asunder, and overmastered by the impulse of the moment, stamped it in fury under his feet; and knowing himself to be no longer invisible, he in his frenzy of indignation rushed toward the palace. But scarcely had he come within view of the grove, when looking up amid the thick darkness, his eye-balls grew stiff, his heart froze with horror; for out of that black canopy, that shroud of impending vapours, a mighty ARM,* clothed in lightning, burst forth, came down as

* For the hint of this passage, and probably that of others, I am indebted to the author of Thalaba, a writer more rich in in-

he stood immoveable, lifted him with the force and swiftness of Fate into the air, and hurried him away through infinite space.

The blank canopy which shrouded the face of heaven now changed to flame, the whole firmament seemed on fire, and Muzoil was held by the grasping hand of that resistless arm suspended over an ocean, immeasurable and shoreless, whose billows rose and swelled, burst and roared beneath that world of flame: — it held him a moment, until he saw the hideous shape, and heard the demon laugh of Logoul, then hurled him from its grasp; and lo! the flaming heavens were dark again, and he felt, in the rush of his descent, that his hour was come.

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vention, and who has more perfectly combined the wildness of the imaginative with the truth of human feeling, than almost any poet of any age.

Then methought
From a dark lowering cloud, the womb of tempests,
A giant arm burst forth, and dropt a sword
That pierced like lightning through the midnight air.

JOAN OF ARC. *Book I.*

CHAPTER VI.

HOW MUZOIL REBUKED THE FAIR DAMSEL, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

'AND do the mysteries of magic end thus? Did magicians and demons of malice conspire to destroy? And were there no spirits of health to soothe and to save?'

Reader, distrust not the goodness of Providence. THE FORTIETH HOUR, though near, is not yet come.

Scarcely had the feet of Muzoil touched the summit of a mountain-wave, ere the Spirit of the Almadora was visibly with him, and with a single pass of his hand brushed away the impending gloom; when, behold! the moon and stars beamed mildly over the waste of waters. Did the Spirit take his hand? Did they move with spirit-speed over the gently subsiding wave? He took his hand, wafted him with swiftness over the heaving wave, and they stood amid the grove of the palace of enchantment.

'The wicked have conspired your death,' said the

preserver of Muzoil; 'but even amid the wreck of worlds,' he added, 'confide in the Supreme Disposer, and nothing of real calamity can assail you. Be firm in faith. The eventful moment draws near. Though forbidden by Seraphina, go to her apartment; an unseen power will direct and receive you; and while you feel constrained to speak the words of truth, remember to speak them with the tenderness of Christian love. She may be more innocent than appearances seem to show; and even if not so, shall a single error of youth have more weight than the exemplary conduct of her whole life? Be the divine light of the golden rule your guide, and ever hope for the best.'

Thus speaking, the Spirit of the Almadora vanished in air, and the same obscurity covered the heavens as before.

The powers of Muzoil had now returned in vigour; remembrance came over him like a cloud; he rushed to the apartment of Seraphina, and found her door standing open. But all the severity of feeling, or intensity of emotion rather, which had hurried him thither, instantly subsided on his viewing the guileless simplicity that sat tranquilly on her countenance; and instead of his vehement upbraidings, he could vent nothing but a flood of impassioned tears.

She eyed him with a look of surprise and sorrow, but no consciousness of guilt, and not so much as the faintest resemblance of evil, was visible. On the contrary, the same lovely expression, call it rather the same seraphic emanation of a finely touched spirit, which he

had admired and loved the first moment they met, still imparted the character of inspired beauty, almost the beauty of holiness, to her features. But the "beware" of the warning spirit came over his soul, and gave him sufficient command of himself to address her.

MUZOIL.

Seraphina! Seraphina! do we meet for the last time? *Must* I bid you farewell forever?

SERAPHINA.

Bid me farewell? How then am I to interpret your expressions of impassioned regard? I remain unchanged myself. What can have produced this air of wildness, this strange alienation, in you? Some delusion has seized you. This is no time for unkindness, Muzoil. You will not leave me, — leave me to brave alone the exasperation of a justly incensed father? I will not, cannot believe you unfaithful and undeserving. You cannot leave me to perish, — me who have preserved your life. — Where is the ring? And why do I see you here? Fatal, fatal rashness! THE FORTIETH HOUR is not yet passed.

MUZOIL.

O thou dissembling — — even now my lips refuse to utter what I cannot but feel. What was your *affection* for me, but poison? What was your *preservation* of me, but death? Seraphina, you are detected. The All-seeing Eye has been upon you. Remem

ber the mist of the vial; — remember the venom of the ring. A spirit has been commissioned to expose your malice, and by his command I now seek your presence.

SERAPHINA.

Believe him not: it was a spirit of falsehood.

MUZOIL.

O how have I deserved evil from you? With what tenderness, with what glowing warmth of passion, I loved you! My character, my mind, MYSELF, I imagined to be not displeasing to you. I imagined, mistaken fool that I was! that your soul was on your lips, that it beamed from your eye. Had I not reason? I thought you sincere as an angel in heaven.

SERAPHINA.

You thought right. You did me no more than justice. I was sincere. Spare yourself, O spare yourself the grief that will come upon you from thus wronging me. You are deceived. I am not undeserving, as you think me. Dear Muzoil, you are deceived.

MUZOIL.

Alas, Seraphina, that the moment has come, a moment even more fatal than THE FORTIETH HOUR can be, when I am forced to accuse you! What would I *not have done* for you! Oh, how intensely my soul *clung to your* image! Do I then love you no more?

False and unmerciful! — what a heart have you destroyed!

SERAPHINA.

O no more; do not, — you break *my* heart.

MUZOIL.

This must be our last meeting, and I cannot give up with indifference what I once loved with a passion so strong. But farewell, farewell, Seraphina. Whatever my fate may be, my heart will ever mourn the perversion of a spirit so pure; disappointed and crushed as it is, it will breathe a prayer for you even in its last struggles. It is not yourself, but the accursed duplicity of magic that destroys us. Remember me sometimes, Seraphina. When in a still evening you see our planet smiling from heaven, think of the banks where we met, and shed one tear to the memory of him who loved you well. Farewell. Even now will I die for you. — (*Turning to leave the room.*)

SERAPHINA.

Never! — never! I may be unworthy of such warmth of attachment; but still, if in aught I have done wrong, I am the innocent victim of another's crime. I am conscious of no deceit or insincerity toward you. One moment hear me.

When I departed on my visit to the land of my *birth*, Logoul discovered by his art, that the first *person I* should meet, on my return, wandering the banks

of the Almadora, he was doomed to find his enemy; and to secure himself against the enmity of this foe, he made me promise to pour amid the air the little vial you saw. If I obeyed, he said, I was destined to be happy with the individual I most loved. He gave me the vial himself, and such he said were the sole properties of the charm. He called it his charm of self-defence. I now fear that his purpose was criminal; but for myself, I never meant nor suspected injury. Injury! O no. I must lay open to you my whole heart. The first hour I saw you, my heart was yours. It was love made me, disobeying the command of my father, introduce you into his palace; and this same affection has made me strive to conceal and preserve you here. I knew that I had done wrong; but I saw in the stars, that could THE FORTIETH HOUR pass over, and you not behold me, all would end happily. Heaven sees not as man sees. I have disobeyed my father; it is the first and only time; and if it be the will of Infinite Wisdom, my life shall pay the forfeit of my disobedience.

MUZOIL.

Forgive me, forgive me, Seraphina! I *was* dedeived; and I echo your "Never, O never!" from my inmost soul. I am most happy, — most blessed, in finding you innocent.

SERAPHINA.

For your sake, for my own sake, dear Muzoil,

too am most blessed in being so. But now, — what now is to be done? That fatal period, — only a few moments remain.

MUZOIL.

Our circumstances, our hopes, our fears, — all urge us to immediate determination. Your father, — shall we not hasten to him together, and together spread before him every event, — the whole of our little history of FORTY HOURS?

SERAPHINA.

It is the most ardent wish of my heart. Let us hasten, — this moment let us hasten to my father.

CHAPTER VII.

MUZOIL AMID THUNDER, LIGHTNING, AND AN EARTHQUAKE, AND THE GREAT GOOD THEY DID HIM.

At that instant the deep tones of a gong were heard throughout this region of sorcery. Did they announce the fatal moment, THE FORTIETH HOUR, to have come? The sea was heard to roar tumultuously; a sweeping hurricane shook the mansion of magic to its foundation; folding sheets of fire completely involved it; and the screams of demons, exulting with joy, mingled with the crash of thunder.

Amid this tumult of conflicting elements, rushed in the old magician and Logoul; the former was pale with dismay, but the features of the latter exhibited a living picture of ferocity. The father of Seraphina spoke with tears.

OLD MAGICIAN.

My child, my child, what have you done! Your *disobedience* — your breaking my command — it is you

that produce this wreck of nature and of my dearest hopes. Destruction is this moment impending. One must die, perhaps all. On this condition only I retain my palace: — THE FOOT OF A STRANGER MUST NEVER CROSS ITS THRESHOLD. Seraphina, it was parental love made me grant your request: O my daughter, how could you abuse my confidence!

SERAPHINA.

My dear father! it was love of this stranger. I alone am guilty; on me let the punishment fall.

MUZOIL.

On me, on me, O magician! let the thunder burst on me. I have no wish to live, — none, separate from your daughter's love.

LOGOUL.

Both, both, annihilate them both! one for endangering our place of abode, the other for trusting to a woman's love. Stand off, magician! stand off! or you too feel my power. Let me strike, let me strike. I'll scatter their limbs in the tempest, and send their souls howling with demons. A moment more, and we are gone . . .

OLD MAGICIAN.

Logoul! have you no pity for the errors of human *nature?* Logoul! what are we? Criminal and abandoned as I am, through your infernal seductions,

cannot consent to destroy this unoffending stranger. Much less can I touch the life of my daughter, the only child of my days of innocence. What appeared trivial in prospect, now wears its true face of horror.

VOICE *amid the uproar.*

Magician! remember the covenant, — remember the condition, and tremble!

OLD MAGICIAN.

Take back thy palace of enchantment, thou Unseen! in the name of the Almighty. In this awful name I most willingly throw from me the accursed art, both now and forever. O Being of beings, let this suffice. I cannot destroy the innocent; I cannot harm my daughter; I fear the hand of Heaven. I cannot———

'But *I* can,' roared the infuriate Logoul. 'No power in the universe shall withhold me.' He then burst from the grasp of the magician, and, furiously brandishing his sword, rushed forward with dreadful impetuosity; but ere he could execute his fell purpose, a thunder-stroke stretched him black and breathless on the floor.

At the very moment of this catastrophe, the guardian spirit of Muzoil became visible in glory, took his hand, and, while amid the convulsions of an earthquake the palace was crumbling to atoms, they were *imperceptibly* lifted above this suffocating atmosphere; *and lo!* they stood on his own native banks, and once

more breathed the fresh air of liberty. No hurricane, no sweeping whirlwind, no confusion of elements: a soft breeze gently curled the surface of the Almadora; the moon walked in brightness and beauty; and the dark-blue dome of heaven, studded with stars, beamed peacefully over them.

This holy transition Muzoil felt to be the *Peace, be still*, of miraculous power. His heart rose to thank his deliverer; but overwhelmed with consternation, as memory rushed upon him, he exclaimed in agony:

'Where is Seraphina? Where is the innocent Seraphina? Why did I not perish with Seraphina!'

The Spirit mildly and thoughtfully replied: 'The ways of Heaven are ways of wisdom. Your loss is indeed severe. I feel its extent, and I give you the strong sympathy of a spiritual nature, — the sympathy of a heart tenderly interested in all that concerns you. But whatever may be your calamity, whether trivial or as now disastrous, should you exclaim, "Why did I not perish with Seraphina! better had death ended at once both life and misery." O no: give to every event of your life a proportionate regard. Remember the words of the wise: "The veil which conceals from view the events of futurity, is a veil woven by the hand of Mercy." God is wise, and will he not know? God is merciful, and will he not pity? God is almighty, and will he not afford alleviation? He removed from *you, one* after another, all you most loved and cherished on earth. He left you at last in utter loneliness, *and* now he has taken from you Seraphina, his newly

bestowed gift, the dearest and the best. Still confide in his wisdom and goodness. Though he slay you, still put your trust in him. The time will come, and it may not be far distant, when you will feel and acknowledge his infinite love. Return home, pour out your heart before him, and be no more distrustful of his providence. "HERE, *or* HEREAFTER!" is the voice of promise: rich and sure are the rewards of faith. Believe in the truth and watchful tenderness of your guardian Spirit.'

The Spirit ceased, and faded into air.

Before Muzoil returned home to his lonely dwelling, he fell on his face in the dust, and prayed with a gush of tears: "O God, convinced of the wisdom of thine every purpose and dispensation, however mysterious, I submit to thy will. If it be thy will, O take me home to the loved and the lost. If it be thy wisdom that I remain longer upon earth, I bow to thy sovereignty in holy confidence. O my Maker and Disposer, pity and enlighten thy lonely child."

When Muzoil arose, the peace of earth, air, and heaven that breathed around him, breathed also within his soul; for the influences of that spirit for which he had prayed, had been granted to his prayer.

Pausing to realize this divine calm of the soul, before proceeding to his home, whom does he behold, — what blessed vision does he see rise before him, in the light of the moon? And did his guardian Spirit, did the *Spirit of* the Almadora, perfectly accomplish their purpose *of kindness*? Yes, their good work is done;

their scheme of love and trial is completed. His own, his true, his well-beloved Seraphina falls upon his neck in the mute ecstasy of gratitude and affection; while her father, rescued from perdition, sheds tears of heavenly hope.

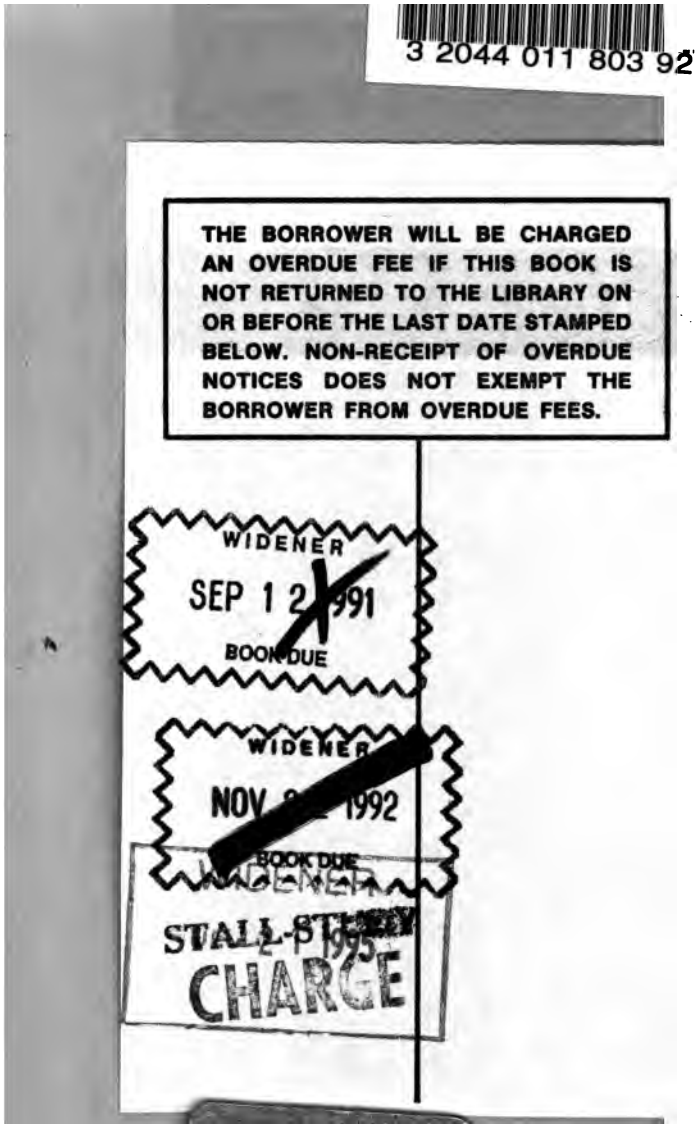
O blessed re-union! Christian light and Christian joys are around them. The delights of mutual tenderness, the energy of faith in the divine will, the glowings of pure devotion, — these form the bliss of father, son, and wife, and these are enough. They are happy. Their lives remind you of the mysterious words that appeared written on the cloud, and make them clear as the characters of truth:

"BEAUTIFUL IS THE BLUSH OF MORNING, — THE SPLENDOUR OF YOUTHFUL HOPE AND LOVE; BUT THE LUSTRE OF MATURED AFFECTION, THE CLOUD OF EVENING, MADE LUMINOUS BY THE MOON, WITH THE STAR OF IMMORTAL LIFE GLEAMING FROM BEYOND, — THIS IS THAT SPIRITUAL LIGHT WHICH NEITHER FADES ON EARTH NOR DIES IN HEAVEN."

This family of love, — do they dwell in the abode of the humble, far removed from the forbidden riches and false grandeur of sorcery? They dwell also in the abode of the believing, the obedient, and the blest of heaven.

Ascending the loftiest eminence on the bank, the *father* often views the scene of his guilt, his penitence, *his preservation*; and, near the grave of his departed *Selena*, he lives in holy hope of pardon and accept

ance; while Muzoil and Seraphina never lift their eyes toward the mountain in the west, without giving thanks to Infinite Goodness for creating them, and making them one. The lustre of the moon setting over it, is not softer or more tranquil than their confidence in each other. Their faithful guardian Spirit, and his sympathizing brother of the Almadora, they bear in grateful remembrance; and they bless the Sovereign Disposer, that THE FORTIETH HOUR is gone forever, leaving them not only unharmed, but in greater security and happiness, it may be, than they had ever dared to anticipate.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